Christian triumph, Christian tragedy : the theological context of Clarissa

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Christian Triumph, Christian Tragedy
The Theological Context of *Clarissa*

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Abstract

Richardson's avowed intention in his novels was to offer moral instruction. Such an intention need not be based on an allegiance to any given system of religious belief, but Richardson himself characterized Clarissa as a 'religious novel', designed to inculcate the doctrines of Christianity, and written in response to what he perceived as the increasingly godless temper of his times.

This study takes as its starting-point Richardson's concern with that apparently irreligious temper of his age, and argues that his work offers not only a warning against moral laxity, but also an assertion of the validity of those theological concepts which were, at the time, facing an unprecedented challenge in the contentions of materialist and empiric philosophy. Accordingly, this study seeks to examine the nature of Richardson's religious beliefs, expressed both implicitly and explicitly in his novels, and to trace the origins of certain key theological concepts, integral to his work, which had been given successive codifications over seventeen hundred years of Christian thought. To this end, I have drawn on the writings of St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas and Calvin, and have sought to demonstrate that the concepts to which their thought gave form were reflected in the religious conduct books of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It may be argued that it was through the mediation of such works that Richardson assimilated the Christian notions of reason, grace and will in the forms that were unchallenged until the Enlightenment.

Finally, since Richardson intended that the heroine of his religious novel should be both a saint and an exemplar to her sex, this study seeks to draw some conclusions about the nature of his presentation of sanctity, and to examine some of the complexities which may trouble the reader in considering Richardson's portrayal of his saintly heroine.

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A Note on Texts

The editions of Richardson's works used in this study are as follows:

Clarissa, ed. by Angus Ross (London: Penguin, 1985)

Clarissa, 4 vols (London: Dent 1962)

Pamela, ed. by Peter Sabor (London: Penguin, 1980, repr. 1985)

Sir Charles Grandison, ed. by Jocelyn Harris (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986)

This study is based on the first edition, edited by Angus Ross, but some reference is made to the third edition, published in four volumes by Dent.

Introduction

Clarissa, generally acknowledged to be Richardson's masterpiece, has enjoyed the most wide-spread attention of his three novels, and has been the subject of a vast number of differing interpretations and approaches. In his own day, Edward Young approvingly wrote to his correspondent, Mrs Delany, to the effect that the novel offered a pattern for female duty[1], while in contrast, a modern commentator has seen the work as providing a devastating critique of a socio-economic system in which the rights of the individual, especially those of the female individual, to some degree of self-determination in the matter of self-disposal were subordinated to the demands of family aggrandizement and social expectation.[2] The contrast in response represents a radical shift in religious and political notions as to how the terms 'rights' and 'duties' are to be interpreted in relation to the individual in society. It was not therefore, to be expected that the author, however carefully he monitored the reception of his novel, could ever determine, once and for all, any definitive interpretation. Accordingly, since Richardson's time, and particularly since the revival of interest in his work over the recent past, reinterpretations have proliferated to the extent that it would be virtually impossible to arrive at any complete consensus of opinion on the novel, except to acknowledge its greatness. For one commentator Richardson's novels are remarkable for their exploration of the sexual dilemmas of the heroines,[3] while for another the focus of his work is the tension between absolute and relative moral values.[4]

Likewise, Clarissa herself may be interpreted as the victim of a patriarchal oppression, or of the social and economic conditions of the day, or again, as a proto-

feminist heroine claiming the right not to be subjected, as a piece of property, to the disposal of others. Her conduct may be explored in relation to the psychology of eating disorders as a response to a familial situation which deprives her of any control of her own life,(5) or as representative of the pattern of Puritan aspirations to sainthood.(6) She may be seen as the creator in her letters of her own deceptive and self-deceiving text in response to that of Lovelace,(7) or as a text in herself, written by others, or even as a text re-written by herself so as to become a version of the word of God.(8) Her creator himself had intended her to be recognized as a saint, and any commentator who makes his or her concern Richardson's own perception of his heroine must find it a fruitful field of enquiry to consider how far she is a credible figure as such, and in relation to which criteria of sanctity. This is one of my aims in this study. For Richardson, her death represents the triumph of faith, but the death of Clarissa, whatever his intentions, has again been variously interpreted; for one commentator, it is a political gesture, a protest against a power system which has determined her fate,(9) while for another, it is an act of revenge on both Lovelace and on the Harlowes.(10)

Such proliferation of interpretations can only testify to the greatness of the work and to the creative vitality which sustains such a varied and continuing engagement on the part of scholars of such widely differing critical persuasions. If there is any consensus about the nature of Richardson's novel, however interpreted, it is that moral and religious themes are integral to the work. Such a perception is given greater or less emphasis, according to the critical preoccupations of the commentator, but since Richardson himself is known to have considered such interests of primary concern, in his life as in his work, it is not surprising that they have received so much critical attention.

This present study is specifically concerned with these particular aspects of Clarissa and attempts to locate the novel within its theological context. That Richardson drew upon the popular devotional literature of his day and on the writings of the Puritan divines of the seventeenth century has been widely demonstrated in a number of studies.(11) However, despite these frequent analyses of Richardson's debt to such popular devotional works, hardly any examination – if any at all – has been undertaken of the theological concepts underlying both such works and Richardson's novels. It is this substratum of the theological concepts which underpin both which is the focus of this present study in an attempt to address this deficiency. Since almost every commentator has something to say, to a greater or lesser degree, about the manner in which Richardson's Christian commitment is reflected in his work, it is surprising that so little attention has been given to the concepts which inform that work, and that so few attempts have been made to examine his novels within the context of the history of theological thought.

This study is intended to offer some conclusions in this much-neglected area of Richardsonian studies by contending that Richardson's novels are underpinned by successive codifications of Christian thought, and that a reader has much to gain by an examination of those novels in relation to the theological concepts which underlie them and which are integral to them. To examine whether Richardson fulfilled his intention, expressed in the Postscript to the third edition, 'to investigate the highest and most important doctrines, not only of morality, but of Christianity'(iv, p.xv) by the light of works of popular devotion is one thing; it is quite another to test his claim by examining it in relation to some of the great classical statements of Christian theology.

My intention in this study is to explore the effect on Clarissa of the author's assimilation of certain key doctrines developed by the Christian Church since its inception. Such doctrines as the fall of man, the frailty of a human nature vitiated by the effects of original sin, and the necessity of Christ's redemptive sacrifice are as old as Christianity itself, while successive theologians from St Paul onwards gradually codified into a system such concepts as those of the eternal law, free will and grace, and the manner in which both reason and free will interact with the workings of Divine Providence.

In this study of Clarissa, I have taken as my starting-point the assumption that Richardson, as an upholder of a conservative religious orthodoxy, was the heir to such well-established traditions of thought, and have attempted an examination of his treatment of his characters and of their progress towards their ultimate eternal destinations, in relation to these Christian concepts. Accordingly, I have drawn on successive codifications of these vital concepts in some of the great statements of Christian doctrine, from the Epistles of St Paul, to the thought of St Augustine, from thence to the work of St Thomas Aquinas as representative of scholastic theology, and to that of Calvin, as the exponent, in his turn, of the doctrines of Protestantism taken to their logical conclusion. The radical divisions between pre- and post-Reformation theology on such matters as the sacraments, church government, and transubstantiation make all the more remarkable the consistency between these differing traditions on such concepts as the eternal law, the freedom of the will, reason and the part played by Divine Providence, both in human affairs and in the ordering of the universe. The challenge to such concepts, in Richardson's time, came not from differing traditions of Christianity, but from the rise of materialist and empiricist scientific and philosophical theories.

It is not suggested that Richardson was an avid reader of such philosophical works, but on the evidence of his letters, he knew enough of their tendencies to be alarmed by them as representative of a threat to Christian orthodoxy. Nor am I suggesting that he had read such theological works, except the Old and New Testaments, as primary sources for his religious thought, but that the doctrines to which they give codification are the ultimate sources of that thought and of the theological concepts integral to his novel, mediated through religious conduct books. I have therefore given some attention to some such popular works as examples of the kind of direct influence that they would have exerted on Richardson and on his contemporaries, in an attempt to demonstrate the manner in which he and his original readers might assimilate such complex theological concepts.

It is also necessary to bear in mind that Richardson's circle of friends and correspondents included a number of clergy and religious thinkers, and it may be assumed that such acquaintance, by letters and discussion, could not but have its effect on his own religious thought. That circle included such diverse religious thinkers as William Law, the mystic and disciple of Jacob Boehme, and the orthodox Anglican divine and poet, Edward Young. There are hints of a number of unexpected and intriguing contributions to Richardson's presentation of his religious theme. Two commentators at least have argued that Clarissa may be read in terms of the influence of Boehmist mysticism, or of a combination of Boehme's mystical theology and of Gnosticism.[12] Even if the reader would not go so far, it is clear that as Clarissa approaches her death, she employs some of the imagery by which numerous mystics have expressed their sense of a relationship with the Absolute, and both she and her creator are acquainted with at least one work of mediaeval mysticism, The Imitation of Christ.

Again, it is apparent that the Protestant Richardson is familiar enough with Catholicism to present convincingly a whole family of devout aristocratic Catholics in the della Porrettas. Moreover, Sir Charles Grandison, who, among his other unparallelled excellences is, of course, well-read, knows of Bannes and Cajetan, two commentators on Aquinas, and is aware of the tradition of Christian casuistry, one strand of Christian thought ancient enough in origin to precede Christianity itself.[13] Clarissa proves herself an excellent casuist in this tradition when she opposes her family's choice of suitor in Mr Solmes. Lovelace clearly knows of the Catholic custom of veneration of relics, and mockingly refers to it when he describes the response of the women of Mrs Sinclair's household, gazing on the blood he has spilled in his self-induced illness[P.677] He is not in a mocking mood when he would enshrine Clarissa's heart; nothing could be more reminiscent of the ancient custom of the veneration of the relics of a saint, and nothing could be more disturbing to the reader. Finally, in some of the rich symbolism with which Richardson invests his heroine, there are echoes of the iconography relating to the virgin saints, and even to the Virgin herself.

Such traces, unemphatic as they are, enrich and deepen the complexity of Richardson's 'religious novel' as he himself described it, and cannot be ignored. However, my intention in the main is to explore the wider context of Richardson's integration of the key concepts of Christian theology into this work, and to demonstrate in doing so, he is the heir to an intellectual tradition rooted in the origins of Christianity. Chapter One seeks to place Richardson against the changing philosophic background of his time, while the second chapter discusses the Christian concepts of reason and grace. The third, fourth, and fifth chapters are concerned with the manner in which Christian thought has based its notions as to how life is to be

lived in accordance with these concepts. The sixth chapter discusses the notions of trial and temptation in relation to the novel. Chapters Seven and Eight look at the part played in Clarissa by the specific sins of lust and pride. The two final chapters are concerned respectively with the deaths of Richardson's sinner, Lovelace, and of his saint, Clarissa. In short, this present study represents an attempt to perceive the economy of heaven and hell as Richardson and his like-minded contemporaries might have seen it, and the consequent overwhelming conviction of the necessity of living a life in accordance with the prescriptions of the Gospel, which led him in contemplating what he regarded as the irreligiousness of his age, to engage the attention of the reading public by the production of what he declared to be 'a religious novel'.

1

The Cause of Virtue and Religion

Religion never was at so low an Ebb as at present: and if my Work must be supposed of the Novel Kind, I was willing to try if a Religious Novel would do good.(1)

Writing to Lady Bradshaigh, Richardson thus makes a judgement on the temper of his times and specifies a purpose in the composition of his greatest novel. In his own eyes and in the eyes of those who were similarly concerned about the moral and intellectual temper of the period, he had good reason for his disquiet. In the Postscript to the third edition, he not only censures the promotion of a taste for luxury, which encourages the exclusion of both domestic and public virtue, but also remarks that:

> He has lived to see scepticism and infidelity openly avowed, and even endeavoured to be propagated in the press: the great doctrines of the Gospel brought into question: those of self-denial and mortification blotted out of the catalogue of Christian virtues.(iv, p.553)

It is only with the benefit of hindsight that the modern reader might conclude that what Richardson perceived as an increasing godlessness was the inevitable and inexorable development of new ways of thinking consequent on the scientific revolution of the previous century and the advent of materialist, empirically-based philosophies so closely related to it.

Be that as it may, from the outset of his career as a novelist, and even before, in his handbook for apprentices The Apprentice's Vade Mecum, Richardson seems to have considered himself, in some respects, as a teacher, and a teacher with a specific field of endeavour, to propagate the doctrines of Christianity. There is considerable evidence of his conviction of the responsibilities of authors in general to promote

virtue and to avoid the propagation of religious infidelity. In the collection of moral sentiments which he published as an adjunct to Clarissa,[2] his comment under the heading of 'Writers' lays out in some detail such authorial responsibilities. He clearly regards their fulfilment as an indispensable part of an author's service to God. For his own part, in the Preface to the first edition, he is careful to anticipate any possible objections to his own presentation of libertine discourse in the correspondence of Lovelace and Belford, and refutes them on the grounds that decency of language is always preserved, and that the rakes themselves reflect on their own failure to observe their moral obligations.[p.35] His additions to the text of Clarissa in the third edition restate this conviction of authorial responsibility. His heroine's remarks on Swift[iv, 504] remind the reader that even authors of distinction may fail in this respect. Moreover, the fact that a contributory cause of Polly Horton's moral decline lies in an unguided choice of reading, underlines the seriousness of such a failure on the part of an author, as well as of the parent who failed to guide in this, as in other moral matters.[iv, pp.543-544] Finally, the reader must be reminded that his villain, Lovelace, as he discourses on the candour of familiar writing,[ii, p.431] is an unscrupulous writer himself, whose correspondence with Belford may indeed candidly express his wicked purposes, but who may be relied upon in any correspondence with a woman to use writing for the purposes of deceit and corruption.

Two comments from Richardson's letters concerning the composition of Pamela indicate how seriously he regarded his responsibility in this respect, since he gives primacy to the didactic aspects of his work. He writes to Stephen Duck:

> By all which you'll observe that *Instruction* is my main End, and if I can *Entertain* at the same time my View will be complete.[3]

A little later he writes to George Cheyne:

> The Cause of Virtue and Religion, was what I wish'd principally to serve![4]

Entertainment is put firmly in its place as a secondary consideration, although the moralist Richardson appears aware that he will be more likely to secure his avowed main purpose by the deployment of the skills of the artist Richardson. Those skills however, are subordinated in his own eyes to what he clearly conceives to be the primary purpose of life. In the Preface to the third edition, he claims that the primary purpose of his novel is:

> To investigate the highest and most important doctrines not only of morality, but of Christianity, by showing them thrown into action in the conduct of the worthy characters; while the unworthy, who set those doctrines at defiance, are condignly, and, as may be said, consequentially punished.[I, xv]

He adds that considerate readers will not respond as if the work were designed only to amuse.

Of his own Christian commitment there can be no doubt. Eaves and Kimpel have revealed that Richardson was baptised into the Church of England and that he adhered to this faith throughout his life.[5] He told his Dutch translator, Stinstra, that his father 'designed me for the cloth. I was fond of his choice'.[6] If Richardson was not to fulfil this intended vocation, he found another, and his sturdy Protestantism is displayed both in the puritan morality of his personal life and in the equally sturdy insistence on the validity of their private consciences demonstrated by his hero, Sir Charles Grandison, and by his heroines. The former claims that he 'lives to himself', while Clarissa considers that to be 'self-acquitted' is of greater importance than to enjoy the approval of anyone else.

However, both in his life and in his work, Richardson reveals a remarkable tolerance, given the age, of religious beliefs which differ from his own[7], and some

of those important doctrines which he incorporates into his work have a theological history which precedes the Reformation.

With reference to this long-standing tradition of Christian thought, Albert R. Jonsen and Stephen Toulmin, in their discussion of the manner in which the doctrines of Christian morality had developed from the system of religion devised by the scholastic theologians of the thirteenth century, assert that their analysis adopted such crucial notions as natural law, conscience and reason, which had been 'inherited in a fragmentary way from Scripture, patriotic writings, and Classical philosophy'. They add:

> By the end of the thirteenth century the theological and moral meanings of these concepts, had, in essence, reached the form they retained until the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century.(8)

It was this tradition of thought, born of this elegant synthesis, and the orthodox interpretation of these important concepts which was under assault at the time at which Richardson expressed his disquiet in his letter to Lady Bradshaigh, and which he clearly intended to reaffirm in his work, setting out to re-iterate 'the great lessons of Christianity, in an age *like the present*'.(9) The new systems of thought, developed by materialist and empiric philosophies, questioned the validity of such doctrines as the immateriality of the soul, or its immortality, along with the existence of God Himself. If the universe was merely a great machine, there was no need of Divine Providence. If the Copernican revolution, as it is often claimed, had removed man from the centre of that universe to its periphery, new philosophies offered a deterministic account of human psychology which denied the freedom of the will as conceived by Christian orthodoxy. Man too, became a kind of mechanism, and the whole concept of a Christian morality based on the eternal law of God was rendered void. In these respects, philosophy and religious orthodoxy parted company. The

work of the influential seventeenth century philosopher, Locke, had suggested the way in which such a rupture might develop. His Essay Concerning Human Understanding had offered, as P. H. Nidditch declares:

> 'A systematic, detailed, reasoned, and wide-ranging philosophy of mind and cogitation whose thrust, so far as it is in line with the future rather than the past, is empiricist'.(10)

Locke does not question the existence of God, the role of Providence, or the validity of Revelation. He concludes to his own satisfaction that 'There is no Truth more evident than that *something* must be *from eternity*',(11) and goes further, claiming that the nature of man's Maker may in some respects be ascertained by the use of reason, asserting:

> If then there must be something eternal, let us see what sort of Being it must be. And to that, it is very obvious to Reason, that it must necessarily be a *cogitative* Being. For it is as impossible to conceive, that ever bare, incogitative Matter should produce a thinking intelligent Being, as that nothing should of itself produce Matter.(12)

Such conclusions could not offend the opinion of Christian orthodoxy of whatever persuasion, although Locke's own views might be characterized as Protestant but not Calvinist, since Nidditch points out that he 'believed that the sovereignty of God is compatible with man's freedom and does not entail predestination'.(13)

However, Locke offended Christian opinion in some important respects, notably his attack on innate ideas, a widely held belief at the time, which was held to underpin religion and morality.(14) Perhaps even more alarming to Christian opinion was that in his Essay Concerning Human Understanding he offers a suggestion which opened up a debate on the nature of the soul, a debate which reverberated throughout the following century:

> We have the *ideas* of *Matter* and *Thinking*, but possibly shall never be able to know, whether any mere material Being thinks, or no; it being impossible for us, by the contemplation of our own Ideas, without revelation, to discover, whether Omnipotency has not given to some Systems of Matter fitly disposed, a power to perceive and think ... (15)

Although Locke declares that he does not desire to 'any way lessen the belief of the soul's Immateriality', his remarks gave fresh impetus to those currents of thought that questioned the Christian belief in the duality of man's nature, or which perceived man as a form of mechanism, thus challenging any conception of the freedom of the will.(16)

The interest in such ideas forms a background to Richardson's remark that 'religion never was at so low an ebb', since much of current intellectual debate so clearly challenged the views of orthodox Christianity. Whatever differences might exist between Christians of various persuasions, the question of the immateriality of the soul was in general accepted, as was its immortality.(17) What was also in question in some intellectual circles was the existence of God Himself, or His existence in the form in which Christian orthodoxy had always perceived Him, as the omnipotent and omnipresent Creator who had not only laid down the blueprint for the working of the universe but who also supervised its operations, and who intervened directly in the affairs of men. Richardson, whose work demonstrates a belief in a personal Providence, strongly objected to deistic doctrines; as a printer, as Sale points out, he printed a large number of religious works, many of which opposed deism, and none of which supported it.(18) He appears to have subscribed to the popular view that deism could be equated with atheism. After the death of Bolingbroke, a writer whose essays suggested deistic views, and whom, along with Hume, he described as 'mischievous',(19) he wrote in some concern to Thomas Edwards that the controversy

excited by the late peer's works would have the effects of perpetuating interest in them:

> I am afraid that so many Tracts on them will add to his Profits, by carrying into Notice Works that would have probably otherwise sunk under the Weight of their dogmatical Abuse and Virulence. I imagine that these Works of the quondam Peer, so far as they favour the Cause of Infidelity, rather abound with Objections against the Christian System, that he thought New, than were really so. He seems to have been willing to frame a Religion to his Practices. Poor Man! He is not a doubter now![20]

Such correspondence shows Richardson very much aware of the threat to religion posed by the unorthodox doctrines espoused by some of the thinkers of his time. He himself was a religious conservative, and wrote to Young that when Sir John Stanley argued in favour of Hartley's view that all men would ultimately be saved:

> I told him (which was the truth) that I had but little time to read anything that I thought controversial, or shocking to fundamentals.[21]

To Lady Bradshaigh, who had found Hartley's doctrines comforting, he confessed that he could hope that the doctrine was true, but could not dare to decide in its favour 'so fearful am I of weakening foundations'.[22] Such remarks might suggest that Richardson the writer would assert all the more strongly in his work the conservative views that he regarded as vital to salvation because Richardson the man was so aware of the dangerous seductiveness of some of the heterodox opinions then current; it may be comforting to think that salvation will finally be extended to all men, but such a view denies the orthodox doctrine of rewards and punishments which he so strongly advocated.

Richardson did not doubt the general tenor of Hartley's work to such an extent that he declined to print it, but he regarded another contemporary writer, Hume, with great dislike 'for his attempts to sap the

foundations of our common Christianity'.[23] Whether he had read any of Hume's writings, or whether he was merely aware, in a general way, of their tenor, he was correct in regarding them as opposed to orthodox Christianity, indeed to religion itself. While Hume never explicitly admits to atheism, his references to the Deity and to religion are couched in terms of an irony which points to disbelief, and in his Treatise of Human Nature, and his Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion, he demolishes, as A. J. Ayer points out,[24] both the *a priori* and *a posteriori* arguments for the existence of God.

It is not surprising therefore that Hume's system challenges the Christian conception of Providence in which Richardson so firmly believes. Commenting on the belief of certain philosophers that everything exists by God's will, and that nothing has any power except that granted by Divine permission, Hume declares, with veiled irony, that such a view diminishes the Divine attributes:

> It argues more wisdom to continue at first the fabric of the world with such perfect foresight that of itself, and by its proper operation, it may serve all the purposes of providence, than if the great Creator were obliged every moment to adjust its parts, and animate by his breath all the wheels of that stupendous machine.[25]

It is clear that Hume gives little credence, if any, to the Christian account of the Deity and of the whole theological system which posits the drama of the fall and redemption. In his Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, he states his views as follows:

> Divinity or Theology, as it proves the existence of a Deity, and the immortality of souls, is composed partly of reasonings concerning particular, partly concerning general facts. It has a foundation in *reason*, so far as it is supported by experience. But its best and most solid foundation *is faith* and divine revelation.[26]

However, the reader may infer that Hume does not think that this foundation is at all solid, since he elsewhere calls revelation into question, together with the

miracles which might seem its validation,[27] and his proviso 'so far as it is supported by experience' is intended to demolish any claims which religion might have to rest on the support of reason. Such views, disseminated or shared, demonstrate exactly why Richardson might have considered Hume 'mischievous'. A man who described himself as 'fearful ... of weakening foundations' might find foundations dangerously undermined by such contentions. Both Richardson's work and his life rested upon a belief in the existence of a God who oversaw, rewarded or punished, and on the immortality of those souls who met His judgements.

Likewise, Richardson's hero and heroines look to reason as their guide to virtue and virtue's rewards. Such a view is well validated in both pre- and post-Reformation theology. To the former, reason is a light 'the shining loveliness of all virtue'[28] and to the latter a lamp which assists men to discern good from evil, vitiated as that faculty now is.[29] Hume's account of reason, on the other hand, gives it a narrowly defined function which denies that it has any role in the production of virtue:

> Reason or science is nothing but the comparing of ideas, and the discovery of their relations; and if the same relations have different characters, it must evidently follow, that those characters are not discover'd merely by reason.[30]

Hume comments that there are those who argue that virtue is merely a conformity to reason, relating such conformity to 'eternal fitnesses and unfitnesses of things' – in other words, to the eternal law of God – and claiming that these standards apply to all rational beings, and that these unchangeable standards of right or wrong 'impose an obligation'. However, he himself claims that morals, as they have an influence on actions and affections, cannot be derived from reason, which is merely 'the discovery of truth or falsehood'.[31] His arguments thus attack both the concept of the eternal law and the Christian contention that reason is the faculty by which

man controls his passions. For the orthodox believer, Hume's discussion of the relationship between reason and passion must have been startling, since he turns upside-down the notion of that relationship generally accepted by believers, and which had a provenance stretching back to the early church. Commenting that both philosophers and men in common life, when they discuss the matter, give the primacy to reason over passion and claim that men are only virtuous when they live in accordance with reason, and that such a preference is based on a belief in its 'eternity, invariableness, and divine origin', he presents arguments which conclude that the basis of this preference is mistaken; the impulses of passion cannot, he argues, be retarded but by a contrary impulse, and he locates the origin of such impulses in pain or pleasure. He concludes that to discuss the combat of reason and the passions at all is to speak unphilosophically, and adds:

> Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them.(32)

Such a contention must stand opposed to the Christian tradition of thought. St. Augustine had referred to the passions as disturbances which befall even the wise man. However, he claims, such a man would subject them to reason, and remarks that:

> The predominant intellect as it were imposes laws on the passions, which keep them within strict bounds.(33)

Similar views are expressed by Aquinas, who declares:

> Reason can command the appetites of sense, both affective and aggressive, and control feeling.(34)

Such contentions are equally valid for Calvin, who warns of the negative effects of failing to follow reason:

> Man does not, in accordance with the excellence of his immortal nature, rationally choose, and studiously pursue, what is truly for his good. He does not admit reason to his counsel, nor exert

> his intellect; but without reason, without counsel, follows the bent of his nature like the lower animals.(35)

It is with such accounts of the relationship between reason and the passions, the contention that the former can – with divine assistance – and should, control the latter, that Richardson's views concur. His hero, Sir Charles Grandison, and his heroines struggle with their passions, and their virtue is established and confirmed by the successful outcome of that struggle. No reader could fail to recognize the pain of Clarissa's confrontation with her own resentment and anger, and to be convinced of the difficulty of achieving control over such powerful passions, nor is it by any means certain that Clarissa's emotions are entirely subdued. Richardson appears, however, to have intended a complete victory for his heroine in the control of her passions. He writes to Lady Bradshaigh enquiring:

> Whether Clarissa in the Command of her Passions in the Prime of her Youth, had not a greater Merit, than if she had given way to them, and been seduced.(36)

Richardson here acknowledges, even if his heroine is shown to be reluctant to do so, the force of a natural response to so attractive a suitor as Lovelace. Clarissa exerts her will in the determination of her conduct in favour of virtue, but those dangerous emotions are controlled, not eliminated thereby. Christian theology would recognize that one of the effects of the fall had been the loss of a perfect balance between reason and the passions. In a post-lapsarian world such perfection of human nature is impossible, and the subjection of the emotions in itself is a fragile victory and still accompanied by pain. This perhaps is one reason why Sir Charles, whose control of his passions leaves not the least degree of ambiguity, does not engage the reader, and why Clarissa does.

Part of the difficulty lies in the vexed question of the freedom of the will, another faculty, in the view of Christian theology, which had been damaged by the

effects of the fall. The degree of freedom retained by this damaged faculty was a question which troubled theologians as well as philosophers. Richardson's understanding of the status of the will appears to be in accordance with that of those thinkers who avoided the extremes of Calvinism and Pelagianism; man has freedom to choose to sin or not to sin, but the inherited damage to his nature means that Divine assistance is required to bring the will to the correct determination. To this end, his heroine seeks God's help in prayer, since many factors may obscure what should be the proper object of her will. Richardson intends, however, that Clarissa should make an active and positive choice of virtue. In a letter to Edward Young he makes exactly this point:

> I mean her to act, and to reason, coolly and deliberately; to touch with *warmth* the subject, but not with *passion*, that her determination may be the result of deliberation.(37)

This remark does not stray too far from the definition of the activity of the will which is given by Thomas Aquinas:

> The will's object is what reason presents to it as good to will, and as planned by reason it is already a moral object and can cause moral goodness of will.(38)

However, Christian accounts of the will and its activity were under challenge from the contentions of materialist philosophy. Hume proposed an account of the will which offered an entirely different interpretation from that of Christianity. No longer a God-given faculty, however damaged, which dignifies man, but:

> By the *will*, I mean nothing but *the internal impression we feel and are conscious of, when we knowingly give rise to any new motions of our body, or new perception of our mind*.(39)

His discussion argues for a deterministic account of the will.(40) We may imagine that we 'feel a liberty within ourselves', but our actions may be inferred from our character and motives.(41) Since he thus undermines the Christian view that

virtue resides in acting in accordance with reason, by means of an exercise of the will in favour of a choice of good, it follows that he discards the notion of the eternal law as a frame of reference for virtuous activity. Hume argues for the existence of a moral sentiment as the basis for virtue, rather than reason. In short, his conclusions directly challenge the Christian view of the relationship between reason, will and virtue:

> I wou'd have anyone give me a reason, why virtue and vice may not be involuntary, as well as beauty and deformity ... As to free-will, we have shewn that it has no place with regard to the actions, no more than the qualities of men. It is not a just consequence, that what is voluntary is free. Our actions are more voluntary than our judgements; but we have not more liberty in the one than in the other.(42)

It may be inferred that such contentious views were the subject of enough discussion, whether expressed by Hume or by other thinkers, to give disquiet to the adherents of Christian orthodoxy, but a deterministic account of the will was by no means new in Richardson's day, nor was an implicit, but openly unacknowledged religious scepticism absent from earlier works of materialist philosophy. Like Hume, Hobbes never openly avows atheism, but it is clear for him, that religion is, at best, a function of the state, which may be socially useful as long as subjects conform in outward practice to whatever is deemed orthodoxy by their sovereign. Certainly Hobbes's discussion of the passions includes a veiled disavowal of belief, and it is one among many. Defining both religion and superstition, he declares:

> *Fear* of power invisible, feigned by the mind, or imagined from tales publicly allowed, RELIGION; not allowed, SUPERSTITION. And when the power imagined, is truly such as we imagine, TRUE RELIGION.(43)

The hint of atheism lies in the 'when' that makes the concept conditional and doubtful. As a corollary of his religious scepticism, his discussions of the nature of the soul, of eternal life, of the Kingdom of God, and of Revelation challenge the views of Christian orthodoxy.(44) Hobbes's notions concerning the nature of the soul could only be shocking to Christian orthodoxy of whatever persuasion. He argues that the term '*substance incorporeal*' is an absurdity, 'as if a man should say, an *incorporeal body*'.(45) He argues that the soul must have substance, declaring:

> The *universe* ... the whole mass of things that are, is corporeal, that is to say, body ... and consequently every part of the universe is body, and that which is not body is no part of the universe: and because the universe is all, that which is no part of it, is *nothing*; and consequently *nowhere*.(46)

Such an account challenges the Christian doctrines of the immateriality of the soul, and of the dual nature of man. Hobbes urges that men should 'no longer suffer themselves to be abused by this doctrine of *separated essences*, built on the vain philosophy of Aristotle'.(47) Likewise, Hobbes's system substitutes for the Christian notion of the eternal law of God, aspects of which manifest themselves in man as 'the law we have by nature', his concept of natural law. He tells his readers that in the state of nature every man has a right to preserve himself and the right to use every means to do so. In this state every man has the right to everything, yet since men both fear death and also desire 'commodious living', reason suggests 'convenient articles of peace'. These articles are the laws of nature. However, despite the restraint of such laws, which lead men to enter into society for general safety and benefit, Hobbes holds that human nature is still immensely competitive; if no law is recognized, then each man is still in a state of war with his fellows. As one modern commentator has pointed out, Hobbes's account of the law of nature differs from the

account of natural law offered by Christian orthodoxy in two respects: it is 'man-centred', and it is 'independent of the will of God'.(48)

If such views and their implicit atheism did not offer challenge enough to Christian convictions, Hobbes's account of human psychology provided fresh matter for orthodox indignation. His contention is that animals exhibit two sorts of motion, one of which is 'vital', concerned with the various physical systems of the body, and the other of which is 'animal', concerned with voluntary movements 'in such manner as is first fancied in our minds'. The initiation of such motions is called 'endeavour'. Endeavour towards any object is called desire or appetite, and away from any object is called 'aversion'.(49) 'Life itself', says Hobbes, 'is but motion and can never be without desire, nor without fear, no more than without sense'.(50)

On this basis he builds a theory which shocked orthodox opinion.(51) He claims that whatsoever is the object of any man's desire he calls good, and for whatsoever he has an aversion, he calls evil. It is clear that such an account must oppose the Christian view that good and evil must be determined with reference to the eternal law of God, as expressive of His will, and discernible by reason. Moreover, since Hobbes claims that man can never be without desire, in his account, as all commentators agree, human beings are necessarily intensely competitive. As Christopher Hill remarks:

> Hobbes's philosophy is a secularized version of the protestant ethic: Hobbes's man in the state of nature is Calvin's natural man – selfish, dominated by evil passions, a lonely individual ... Hobbes has rightly been seen as the high priest of competitive individualism.(52)

In Hobbes's account, if man is driven by his desires and aversions, and is at the same time inherently competitive, these factors have a bearing on the exercise of his will. Hobbes defines the will as 'the last appetite, or aversion, immediately adhering to the action, or to the omission thereof'.(53) Since he claims that man can

never be without desire or aversion, his account of the will is essentially deterministic, and concludes that liberty exists only where there is no external compulsion or opposition.(54) Man is therefore driven by the irresistible impulses of his nature to be selfish, and to seek, endlessly, the fulfilment of his desires in competition with his fellows.

> For by necessity of nature every man doth in all his voluntary actions intend some good unto himself.(55)

However, the implication is that any man may define what constitutes that good, and it may well conflict with the good of another.

Such views had been adopted in the late seventeenth century by those who called themselves libertines, whether they endorsed Hobbes's philosophical system as a whole, or used its contentions about human psychology to justify a life of sexual freedom as a response to the irresistible demands of human nature.(56) In this latter sense, such contentions are a source, whether at first or second hand, for the character of Lovelace. He does not adopt atheism as a philosophical position, but his conduct in the sphere of morals reflects Hobbes's view of human psychology. In its psychological aspect libertinism meant for its professors the primacy of desire, the constant need for conquest, and an assertion of the supremacy of the ego. Such men as these are to be found as the anti-heroes of Restoration comedy; they recognize no laws but the demands of their own appetites, and annexe to themselves the right to fulfil those appetites. Such a man is Lovelace. Richardson did not choose to make his rakes:

> Either infidels or scoffers; nor yet as think themselves freed from the observance of other moral obligations.(57)

For his own purposes, which require examination later, he had good reason for declining to do so, but in other respects, Lovelace is closely related to those men

of the Restoration court, and to those literary creations, who profess a libertinism based on the contentions of Hobbes. Jocelyn Harris claims[58] that Richardson's portrayal of Lovelace was influenced by the character of Don John in Thomas Shadwell's play The Libertine (1675). The similarities are apparent. Don John, like Lovelace, has followers who emulate his violence, egoism and sexual voracity. However, as a character he lacks the subtlety of Lovelace. Whatever the character may be in performance, on the page he lacks credibility because of the sheer, unrelenting indiscriminateness of his sexual appetite. There are enough echoes throughout the play of Hobbes's doctrines to indicate that the author has drawn the character of Don John with the philosopher's writings in mind. The most important of these occurs when the shipwrecked anti-hero encounters a hermit, and Don John and his followers offer an exposition of the libertine version of Hobbes's views, by claiming that 'all our actions are necessitated', and by enquiring whether 'that blind faculty the will be free; when it depends upon the understanding?'[59]

In response to this, the hermit argues for the Christian view that the understanding is free, and that 'foolish men and sinners act against their understandings, which inform 'em better'. A warning from him to abandon their 'devilish philosophy' and to change the destructive course of their lives meets with the response that they are what they are by nature. 'If we be bad, 'tis nature's fault that made us so'.[60]

In relation to his own rake, Richardson might almost be playing the hermit's part. He chooses not to make Lovelace an atheist, so that his anti-hero may be seen to do what the hermit accuses Don John of doing, acting against his understanding, despite the warnings he receives. In the Postscript to the third edition, Richardson defends his decision not to make Lovelace a philosophical atheist against some

objections to the presentation of his villain as a libertine in practice only. He claims that Clarissa would have been inexcusable had she even considered his addresses, if she had known him to be an unbeliever. He also points out that there are many persons whose actions are not consistent with their beliefs, and compares Lovelace to those devils in Scripture, who 'believe and tremble'.(iv, pp.559-560) Lovelace, Richardson writes to Lady Bradshaigh, is one who:

> Sinning against the Light of Knowledge, and against the most awakening Calls and Convictions, was too determined a Libertine to be reformed, at least till he arrived at the Age of Incapacity.(61)

He thus gives to Lovelace's libertinism an aspect which at once deepens the complexity of his character and deprives him of the excuse of an intellectual subscription to the atheistic doctrines of materialist philosophy to account for his conduct. In this respect, he is all the more a sinner since he is neither deprived of knowledge of Christianity, nor of belief in its doctrines. His eventual – probable – fate is therefore all the more painful.

However, in many other respects, Lovelace follows his libertine antecedents in professing some of the doctrines of Hobbes. The description offered by Stephen Orgel of Shadwell's libertine, Don John, might equally apply to Lovelace:

> A narcissist whose avidity for pleasure and domination destroys him as well as his conquests.(62)

Likewise, Don John's reflection on his seductions might easily have been said by Lovelace, whose own attitude to his victims is similar, even if the pleasure he derives from seduction is intellectual rather than sensual:

> What an excellent thing is a woman before enjoyment, and how insipid after it!(63)

Both men exemplify the persistence of desire which Hobbes identifies as an integral part of human nature. One sexual conquest succeeds another, a situation

which in Don John's case ceases only with death, and in that of Lovelace when Clarissa's response to his assault demonstrates the triumph of her Christian convictions over his libertine principles; desire for further conquest fades into futility. In a sense, what Lovelace represents as a libertine, the logical corollary of a view that reduces man to an animal mechanism, has assaulted what Clarissa represents as a Christian, the contention that man is made in the image of God, and is a moral being endowed with reason and free will, supported by grace, and has found itself impotent to change or defeat it. The new philosophical theories which expressed doubt of the very existence of God, and challenged the Christian conception of the nature of man, must have seemed to Richardson to represent a similar assault on the doctrines of Christianity. In Clarissa herself he demonstrates his conviction that those doctrines can neither be changed nor overcome.

What remains for Lovelace, who has lived by the libertine principles that an endless desire requires endless fulfilment, and that the competitiveness of human nature seeks domination, is the death that comes from making those principles the grounds on which his life is predicated. His physical death after his defeat in this life will be followed by his – probable – eternal death in the next. This conclusion is an ironic confirmation of Hobbes's own contentions:

> So that in the first place, I put for a general inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in death.(64)

Or again:

> Nor can a man any more live, whose desires are at an end, than he, whose senses and imaginations are at a stand. Felicity is a continual progress of the desire, from one object to another; the attaining of the former, being still but the way to the latter … (65)

The Hobbist Lovelace substitutes such successive goals for the pursuit of the one eternal goal of human existence. In this sense, even Clarissa is a substitute,

although in earthly terms he could have no better object, but having lost her, and unable to grasp any conception of the one enduring object, there is nothing left but death, in this life and in the next. He himself recognizes the void that confronts him at the loss of an object. When Clarissa escapes him, he writes despairingly to Belford:

> Wanting *her*, I want my own soul, at least everything dear to it. What a void in my heart! What a chillness in my blood, as if its circulation were arrested![p.740]

Lovelace's remarks read as if they were those of a man who feels the approach of death, but in terms of Hobbes's account of psychology, it is as if Lovelace has lost the object of desire and can have no other. In Christian terms, death awaits him because he has never found his true object. In a curious way, Lovelace's remarks also carry an echo of the contentions of that other philosopher who also doubted God's existence and the validity of the Christian system. His description of himself as a void deprived of the presence of Clarissa to give him substance is reminiscent of Hume's notion of identity, that the individual is no more than a tenuously connected series of impressions. Hume denies that there may be something 'simple and continu'd' which the individual may call himself, and adds of those who believe otherwise:

> But setting aside some metaphysicians of this kind, I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind, that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity, and are in a perpetual flux and movement.[66]

The reader is reminded of the Protean nature of Lovelace, and if Hume's remarks leave out any notion of an immortal soul – and implicitly deny its existence – Lovelace's tragedy for his author is that he does have a soul to be lost. However, the Lovelace who exemplifies the Hobbist doctrine that men propose to themselves

an endless series of goals compromises that soul because of his inability to fix on one eternal goal.

By contrast, throughout her trials, Clarissa's conception of the one true end of human existence becomes increasingly more clearly defined. In this respect, she and Lovelace stand diametrically opposed, and it is, in fact, her fate, from the beginning of the novel, to stand opposed to those who exemplify the Hobbist traits of competitiveness and of endless desire, whether those desires reach in the direction of social aggrandizement, as in the case of the Harlowes, or sexual conquest, as in the case of Lovelace. Both of these objects of desire oppose the Christian notion of man's true good. The Harlowes define wealth and material success as their good, and regard Clarissa's opposition as undutiful (although in both Christian and Hobbist terms, she could be said to oppose her good to theirs), while Lovelace defines his good in terms of domination. His desire for conquest is what Hobbes calls 'Glory, or internal gloriation or triumph of the mind', which Hobbes acknowledges may bear both a favourable or unfavourable interpretation. He defines it in the following terms:

> That passion which proceedeth from the imagination or conception of our own power, above the power of him that contendeth with us ... and this passion, by them whom it displeaseth, is called pride: by them whom it pleaseth, it is termed a just valuation of himself.(67)

The subject of pride, in both its positive and negative aspects is one which Richardson explores in relation to both Lovelace and Clarissa. If the pride of the former depends on his triumph in sexual domination, it appears that he also embraces the political tenets of Hobbes in his conviction that 'once subdued, always subdued'. Hobbes's discussion of the right of conquest in war concludes that such a right depends on the consent of the vanquished to the conqueror. This is exactly

Lovelace's approach in his campaigns of seduction; indeed, he frequently employs military metaphors to describe his activities. He prefers seduction to rape, and expects the vanquished to yield and to acknowledge his power ever after. Clarissa, however, declines to give her consent, either to seduction or to his right of conquest after the rape. She cannot acknowledge Lovelace as her conqueror, since her will has not consented to what Lovelace at first mistakenly regards as conquest. In Christian terms, her freedom and autonomy do not depend on any act of his, whether imprisonment, deception, or rape, but only on her conformity to her own conscience. In relation to those women whom Lovelace does seduce and subdue, he annexes to himself the absolute power of a Hobbist sovereign, and claims the right to try, to judge and to punish. When the one woman who refuses to acknowledge that power escapes him, he expresses his outrage very much in terms of an absolute monarch defied by a rebellious subject.(pp.736-742)

If Lovelace's campaigns of seduction would seem to be in accordance with Hobbes's political theories, his conviction, frequently pointed out, that Clarissa must at last reveal a nature essentially sexual is in accordance with the philosopher's account of human psychology. Hobbes's contention that men can never be without desire has a specific application with regard to sex. This appetite, he claims, is called 'lust' only when it is condemned, but otherwise 'love', 'for the passion is one and the same indefinite desire of the different sex, as natural as hunger'.(68) This suggests that desire, like hunger, always requires satisfaction, and that its fulfilment is as much a condition of life as the satisfaction of hunger; both satisfactions are integral to the organism. As one modern commentator has put it:

> In sum, his thesis is that it is a fact of nature that we are wired up to act according to our desires.(69)

Such a contention would offer a basis for Lovelace's conviction that Clarissa must at last reveal a nature which seeks the satisfaction of this natural hunger; he will prove her woman, not angel.(70) Moreover, in his notions as to how he is to bring about this effect, he again proves himself a thorough Hobbist. He often reminds Belford of his own – considerable – personal attractions, claiming that these give him the advantage over his fellow-rakes in matters of seduction. Belford's plain ruggedness, he asserts, renders him far less likely to succeed. Hobbes's account of erotic love endorses Lovelace's opinion of such aesthetic qualities as those on which he values himself:

> For the most part, they have much better fortune in love, whose hopes are built upon something in their person, than those that trust to their expressions and service; and they that care less, than they that care more.(71)

In this instance, Clarissa too, although she urges on Anna the virtues of the not overly attractive Mr. Hickman as being those qualities required to make a woman happy in marriage, is, in her unacknowledged response to Lovelace, of the devil's party without knowing it. His personal attractions *do* have their effect on her judgement, and *do* influence her conduct. One aspect of her journey towards the sanctity which her creator intends for her, and which Richardson would claim that the Creator intends for all who adhere to His law, is the accession to the knowledge of her fault in this , and in other respects, and to repentance in response.

Whatever her faults, in the main Clarissa's views and conduct are based firmly on the Christian concepts of the eternal law of God, and on the concepts of reason, grace and freedom of the will which had been developed into a coherent system by successive generations of theologians. Richardson is not writing a work of theology, but he is writing a work of fiction to which these concepts are integral, and he is asserting their validity in the face of currents of thought which presented them

with unprecedented challenges. It would be too reductive to argue that his heroine merely embodies, in however attractive a form, those concepts which Richardson must have perceived as being under threat, nor may he be said to be writing a form of Christian allegory, but his exploration of his fictional world, in particular of the relationship between Clarissa and Lovelace, does offer some conclusions as to the results, in Christian terms, of affirming or denying the validity of those vital concepts. It is by such affirmation that his heroine is to be made a saint, although in the presence of such ambiguities in her character which the honesty of Richardson's presentation demands, the reader must be led to reflections on the nature of sanctity. While it could never be denied that this novel is on any terms a great work of art, Richardson himself characterized it as a 'religious novel'. It is arguable that it is from this character that the work derives its great force and power to engage and disturb the heart and mind; it is not in question that it does both.

Richardson wrote in an age when religious beliefs, and controversy about such beliefs, had a primacy of interest which they have now largely lost. From the perspective of two and a half centuries, his concern at the irreligiousness of his age might seem excessive to a modern reader, but from that same perspective, it is also possible to see why, from the point of view of a conventional and traditional moralist, there was cause for concern. In the face of the challenges to the age-old doctrines of Christianity, he asserts their validity. It is by the criterion of their adherence to those doctrines that he believes man will be judged by God, and expects his characters to be judged by his readers. Those readers are invited to follow their progress to tragedy or triumph and to share Richardson's concern with the ultimate destinations of these characters. Finally, the reader is required to apply the lessons implicit in the

novel to himself. In Richardson's eyes, no requirement could be more urgent or exert a greater force.

2

The Light of Reason and the Grace of God

The account given in the Old Testament of God's creation of man and of the latter's fall from grace is complemented in the New Testament by the account of the coming of Christ and of His sacrifice, by which man is redeemed from the condemnation to which Adam's sin had exposed not only himself, but also each and every one of his descendants. Christianity has traditionally accepted that the breach in the relationship between God and man was the result of freely-chosen evil on the part of the latter, and could only draw upon itself the condemnation of a just God. However, since He is also a merciful God, He did not leave man without hope of reconciliation, nor without the assistance which his now-fallen nature would require before that hope might be fulfilled.

Adam's sin had offended against a divinely-established order. In terms of the physical universe, this order would govern such operations as the movements of the heavenly bodies or the changes of the seasons, but in relation to the moral universe it requires intellectual beings to live in accordance with God's will, and for man, it is 'the law which is written in men's hearts and cannot be erased however sinful they are'.[1] This aspect of the Divinely-established order governed man as a moral and spiritual being in his pre-lapsarian state, and while he observed its laws, he was in harmony with the will of his Creator. However, since justice is also a manifestation of that same law, Adam drew upon himself his condemnation in accordance with the immutable and eternal laws of God.

These doctrines concerning the breach of God's eternal law, man's fall from Grace and the Divine mercy which offered redemption underlie the whole structure of Christian theology, and are accepted by believers of differing persuasions. Calvin, asserting that man had enjoyed clarity of intellect and the due subordination of his affections to his reason in his pre-lapsarian state, claims that in that state man was indeed the image of his Maker. However, man having lost that state, he adds:

> It cannot be doubted that when Adam lost his first estate he became alienated from God. Wherefore, although we grant that the image of God was not utterly effaced and destroyed in him, it was, however, so corrupted, that any thing which remains is fearful deformity.(2)

Likewise, the conviction that man's nature had sustained a self-inflicted wound which deprived him of his pre-lapsarian innocence and the enjoyment of harmony with his Creator finds expression in the writings of an earlier theologian of a different tradition. Aquinas writes:

> Inherited sin is a disordered disposition that has resulted from dissolution of the harmony of an original integrated state, just as sickness results from dissolving the harmony of health. It is a lack of that integrated state which shows itself in a disordered condition of the soul's parts ... So as a result of inherited sin, there is an inclination in us to disordered action, not directly, as there would be from a personal vice, but indirectly, inasmuch as inherited sin has taken away the original integrated state that would have prevented disordered movement.(3)

Protestant theology may differ from Aquinas's assertion that the damage sustained by human nature expresses itself in a 'disordered disposition', and may claim instead that it has resulted in what one modern commentator calls a 'drive or impulse of the will'(4) but both traditions accept that damage and its disastrous effects as an undisputed fact. Not the least of these effects is that man incurred the penalty of death. St. Augustine tells us that God did not create man in the condition of the angels in being incapable of death even if they sinned; humanity brought this penalty

on itself.(5) Likewise, the loss of what Calvin calls man's 'first estate' and Aquinas refers to as 'an original integrated state' exposed man to the misery of a nature which can never be free of temptation 'since we are born with an inclination toward evil',(6) as one of Clarissa's own favourite spiritual authors remarks, while reminding his readers that since the fall, human nature has declined, so that left to itself, it always inclines to evil. He adds later that reason may know the difference between good and evil, but because of man's fallen nature, cannot do what it knows to be good.(7) Moreover, the loss of that original integrated state, as theologians of all persuasions agreed, was also the loss of the finely-tempered balance between reason and the passions. Calvin tells us that man originally was provided by God with intellect and will, and 'in the mind and will there was the highest rectitude, and all the organic parts were duly formed to obedience, until man corrupted its good properties and destroyed himself'.(8) St. Augustine, speaking of that same loss of that happy state, refers to the warfare in man in which 'the desires of the body oppose the spirit, and the spirit fights against the body's desires'. He adds:

> Now this war would never have been if human nature had, by free choice, persisted in that right condition in which it was created. As it is, however, human nature has refused to keep that peace with God in happiness; and so in its unhappiness it is at war with itself.(9)

In the light of such contentions, it appears that no human being can ever be held entirely free of such fatal tendencies. The only question at issue is the degree to which human nature has been damaged. Calvin and his followers argued for the complete corruption of human nature as a result of Adam's sin:

> Original sin, then, may be defined a hereditary corruption and depravity of our nature, extending to all the parts of the soul, which first makes us obnoxious to the wrath of God, and then produces in us works which in Scripture are termed works of the flesh.(10)

He argues that all ancient theologians, excepting only St. Augustine, 'exceeded due bounds in extolling the powers of the human will', and condemns the opinion that man was corrupted only in his sensual nature, and that reason remained intact or virtually unimpaired.(11) Reason itself, he tells us 'being partly weakened and partly corrupted, a shapeless ruin is all that remains'.(12) Only the elect, arbitrarily chosen by God in His inscrutable wisdom, will be redeemed from this pitiful state; the remainder of mankind are justly condemned to eternal perdition. There was no place in such a system for the Pelagian view, once condemned by St. Augustine, that the will of man was essentially good, and that grace is given to man on account of his merits.

In setting out to produce works which 'might tend to promote the cause of religion and virtue'(13), and in which he intended for his most exalted heroine a 'Sort of Happiness (founded on the Xn system)'(14) it appears that Richardson could hardly fail to include in his scheme, both implicitly and explicitly, themes based on these Christian doctrines, enshrined in seventeen hundred years of successive codification. He does not, however, appear to adopt either the Calvinist or the Pelagian view of man's nature and position in relation to God. His hero, Sir Charles, and his heroines recognize in themselves and in others the frailty that is common to fallen nature, and acknowledge the necessity to subdue their passions to the primacy of reason, while the less exalted characters demonstrate, by their failure to act on such a prescription, the temporal and spiritual penalties to which human kind is liable as a result of the fall. No-one, however virtuous and well-intentioned, is ever able to claim to be without a tendency towards sin, and such a tendency and the constant vigilance necessary to guard against it, involve the individual in

unremitting struggle. Thus, no-one can be sure of salvation, except the dying Clarissa when she has apparently overcome all earthly desires, but equally, Richardson does not seem to deny at least the possibility of salvation for even the most hardened of sinners, if they can achieve a sincere repentance even at the threshold of death itself. In his treatment of those of his characters whom he shows consciously and earnestly struggling to achieve their salvation, he would seem to be in agreement with the views of William Law, who recognizes that such endeavours must inevitably fall short, but must not, on that account, be ever abandoned:

> But fallen men can only do their best, and this is the perfection that is required of us; it is only the perfection of our best endeavors, a careful labor to be as perfect as we can.(15)

By following this prescription, both Law and Richardson might agree, no-one need despair of salvation. However, those of his characters who disregard it, or perversely claim that human nature is such that effort is futile, because of the flaws of that nature, compromise any hope of heaven if they persist in such views and fail either to repent or to engage in that vital struggle. Lovelace argues that human nature cannot resist its tendency to evil and seems to take a perverse pride in claiming that this is the case. He meets an anticipated reproach from Belford on account of his deceptions of Clarissa and Anna in intercepting their correspondence, and for the revenge he intends to inflict on them, with a cynical comment on the human capacity for sin:

> If thou sayest that the provocation I have given to *one* of them will justify *her* freedoms; I answer, so they *will* to any other person but myself. But he that is capable of giving those provocations, and has the power to punish those who abuse him *for* giving them, *will* show his resentment; and the more vindictively, perhaps, as he has *deserved* the freedoms?
>
> If thou sayest it is, however, wrong to do so, I reply that it is nevertheless human nature – and wouldst not have me be a man, Jack?(p.859)

Not for Lovelace an attempt to struggle, as Richardson clearly demonstrates his belief that man should, against the frailty of his nature, or to strive to moderate or control the passions of pride and anger. Such a struggle, and Richardson's analysis of it, must, however, bring into prominence the vexed question of free will. In his own day some systems of materialist philosophy offered a deterministic account of this faculty, but Christian theologians themselves differed as to the degree to which the will, in man's fallen state, might be considered to be free, and as to how far man must be considered responsible for his own salvation. Opinions varied from those of Calvinists who argued that man can do nothing of himself, in his totally corrupted state, and that the direction of the will to good and its constancy after direction, depends entirely on the grace of God, to the view that the human will and grace interact in the vital process of achieving salvation.

St. Augustine asserts that man is the only creature, except for the angels, on whom God has bestowed free will.(16) Both Adam and the angels exerted their free will in favour of evil, and God allowed them to do so, despite His foreknowledge both of the sins which they would commit and of the consequences of these sins.(17) St. Augustine claims that man's abuse of that freedom has left him unable to exercise his will in favour of goodness without Divine assistance:

> For man's nature was created good by God, who is good; but it was made changeable by him who is changeless, since it was created from nothing. And so the will in that nature can turn away from good to do evil – and this through its own free choice; and it can also turn from evil to do good – but this can only be with the divine assistance.(18)

Man's first freedom, he tells us, was the freedom to choose not to sin(19), and it follows, as he points out elsewhere, that freely chosen evil must bring its own punishment.(20) The doctrine that the human will can only be exerted in favour of

goodness with divine assistance was adopted by Christian orthodoxy. Aquinas makes the same point in his discussion of the relationship between the will and grace:

> The human soul is subordinate to God as the particular to the universal agent. Therefore there cannot be a right movement in the soul that is not anticipated by the divine action ... knowledge of his supernatural end comes to man from God: because man cannot obtain such knowledge by his natural reason, since it surpasses his natural faculty. Therefore the movement of the will towards our last end needs to be anticipated by the Divine assistance.(21)

It would be possible to interpret the position of Clarissa, Sir Charles and Pamela in the light of Calvin's doctrine of election, and to see Richardson's villains - Lovelace in particular – as reprobate, but Richardson's presentation of his characters does not appear to offer them to the reader in this light. The reader witnesses his hero and his heroines in the daily process of willing to be saved, despite the frailty of their fallen nature. Their creator's technique of writing to the moment(22) renders this process all the more vivid and immediate as his characters are faced with the temptations which arise from the attractions of the world, the demands of the flesh, and the deceit of the devil, materialism and ambition, disordered desire, pride, anger and despair. They make their choices, but not easily and always with an acknowledgement of the part played in those choices by the grace of God. Even the man of achieved virtue, Sir Charles, must acknowledge his constant struggle against pride and ambition, and even Clarissa, Richardson's saint, does not achieve that state of sanctity without leaving questions in the reader's mind. If the reader must assume that certain characters have earned damnation, in taking pains to show why they have done so, Richardson at no point appears to endorse a belief in predestined reprobation. His villains demonstrate the effects, both in themselves and on the lives of others, of depriving themselves of access to Divine grace, but his presentation of them suggests that they have had opportunities of availing themselves of its

assistance. Richardson's position in regard to his characters might well be summed up in the words of one modern commentator on the religious positions established in the preceding century which influenced the theological views in some circles during Richardson's own formative period.

> The human faculties, although impaired by the fall, are not wholly vitiated; right reason, which is as much a gift of God as faith, can enable man to know God and discern the good, although he cannot follow the good without the help of grace. Christ stands in relationship to man not only as redeemer but also as example of perfect faith and obedience for him to imitate. The process of salvation involves constant human effort and choice, and it is always possible for man to fall from grace through his own fault.(23)

Richardson's villains demonstrably fall from grace through their own fault; those who acknowledge as much and repent, even on their death-beds, as Belton does, have a hope of salvation. Lovelace, who acknowledges his own sins and glories in them, and who is offered grace time and time again, must be considered as almost certainly damned.(24) As for Clarissa, Richardson states his intentions about the exercise of her will in a letter to Aaron Hill.

> And yet, I would that she should have some little things to be blamed for, tho' for nothing in her Will.(25)

His heroine is not to be without human frailty and is to be liable to faults, but she is not to commit the kind of sins which place her in peril of her soul's loss. His description of his heroine's spiritual state would seem to be at variance with Calvin's rejection of the scholastic distinction between mortal and venial sin:

> They define venial sin to be, desire unaccompanied with deliberate assent, and not remaining long in the heart. But I maintain that it cannot even enter the heart unless through a want of those things required in the Law. ... But every transgression of the Law lays us under the curse, and therefore even the slightest desires cannot be exempted from the fatal sentence.(26)

It appears that what Richardson intended his heroine to be innocent of committing were those sins which Aquinas characterizes as 'fatal', a type of offence

which severs the sinner eternally from God. Such sins are the result of a deliberate act of the will. Aquinas says:

> If a sin so disorders our life as to turn it away from its ultimate goal in God, to whom we are joined by charity, then the sin is fatal or mortal; in its nature it is irreparable and brings with it an eternal penalty.(27)

He adds a little later that such sins are attributed to reason.(28) In fallen man reason may fail so far as to mistake its true goal or to choose another. The reader may infer from Richardson's statement of his intentions and from his presentation of Clarissa that any such 'little things' for which she may be blamed may not be attributed to a disorder so severe that it could eternally sever an individual from God. His treatment of his heroine shows her as a woman fully cognizant of the doctrine of free will, and aware of the part played by a failure of reason in the disorder of sin. Reflecting on the possibility of marriage to Lovelace, she writes to Anna of her misgivings about such a union:

> But they arise principally from what offers to my own heart, respecting, as I may say, its own rectitude, its own judgement of the *fit* and the *unfit*; as I would without study answer *for* myself *to* myself, in the *first* place; to *him* and to the *world,* in the *second* only. Principles, that *are* in my mind; that I *found* there; implanted, no doubt, by the first gracious Planter: which therefore *impel* me, as I may say, to act up to them, that thereby I may to the best of my judgement be enabled to comport myself worthily in both states (the single and the married), let others act as they will by *me*. (p.596)

When Clarissa speaks of her heart, she is clearly not referring to any such moral sentiment in which Hume locates the origin of virtue in his rejection of the notion that virtue may be related to 'eternal fitnesses and unfitnesses of things'.(29) For Clarissa here the heart is the faculty of judgement, and the principles which she claims to find there may be related to the law which we have in us by nature. Her remarks assert her belief that it lies within the individual, with Divine assistance, either to act upon the prescriptions of that law, or to reject it. It is not therefore

surprising that Clarissa is shocked and appalled by what she calls 'a judicial hardness of heart' exhibited by Lovelace, since what is implied by this phrase is a recognition that such a state of the soul is characteristic of a constant, consistent and deliberate rejection of the prescriptions of that same law. Lovelace has chosen to be what he is, against the promptings of any better impulses; he has therefore rejected grace and rejected it deliberately. She tells him:

> What *sensibilities* ... must thou have suppressed! What a dreadful, what a judicial hardness of heart must thine be; who canst be capable of such emotions as sometimes thou hast shown; and of such sentiments as sometimes have flowed from thy lips; yet canst have so far overcome them all as to be able to act as thou hast acted, and that from settled purpose and premeditation; and this, as it is *said*, throughout the whole of thy life, from infancy to this time! (p.852)

Her remarks bring into focus the close relationship between the faculty of reason, which discerns good and evil, and will, the faculty by which the individual implements his choice of one or the other. It is a relationship which Christian theology defines as crucially important.

> Our actions are controlled by reason acting in virtue of some previous acts of will (compare the way will chooses and uses in virtue of some previous act of reason). For control is exercised by issuing orders, and order is reason's prerogative ... The root *subject* of freedom is will, but the root *cause* reason: will is free to move in more than one direction only because reason can have more than one conception of what is good.(30)

Clarissa's assumption that Lovelace's habitual and deliberate choice of sin, his misuse of his free will in the past, has led to a state in which his heart is hardened and which therefore renders him less likely to choose good in the future, is one which Christian theology would support. Aquinas tells us that sin may begin in childhood, and that an individual arriving at the age at which he begins to use his reason must be held responsible for directing himself towards a rightful goal. 'This is the time laid down', he tells us 'For obeying God's positive command to *Turn to me and I will*

turn to you'.[31] It is a command which Lovelace has ignored. Aquinas offers likewise a comment on the dangers of an habitual choice of sin which would seem to endorse Clarissa's reproof:

> Sinful actions can directly predispose us to other sins of the same kind. But sins non-fatal by nature cannot in this way predispose us to sins fatal by nature, though they can lead to sins that the sinner can make fatal; for the more disposed he is to sin non-fatally the more his desire to sin grows, and eventually he may choose what he has become habituated to as his goal in life. Actions non-fatally sinful in nature can dispose us indirectly to actions fatally sinful by nature, by sapping our resistance to disorder as such, and thus to choosing what is fatally sinful by nature.[32]

Lovelace is not without a recognition himself both of the nature of free will and of his own weakened ability to exercise it in favour of virtue. However, he uses his weakened spiritual state as an excuse for future failures to choose what he knows to be right, while yet acknowledging the wickedness of doing otherwise. Contemplating the conquest of Clarissa, he writes to Belford in terms which seem to extenuate the crime – the fatal sin – that he intends to commit, while actually revealing its full heinousness:

> Oh Jack! what a difficulty a man must be allowed to have, to conquer a predominant passion, be it what it will, when the gratifying of it is in his *power*, however wrong he knows it to be to resolve to gratify it! Reflect upon this; and then wilt thou be able to account for, if not to excuse, a projected crime, which has *habit* to plead for it in a breast as stormy, as uncontrollable! – (p.868)

This statement opens up the whole question of free will. Lovelace acknowledges that he has it within his power to abstain from gratifying his predominant passion – rather pride than lust perhaps – but he also recognizes that to refrain has been made difficult by the self-indulgence to which he admits. Because he has habitually chosen to do wrong, it is now difficult to do what is right. 'When the will is enchained as the slave of sin', says Calvin, 'It cannot make a movement towards goodness, far less steadily pursue it'.[33] The theological problem lies in

determining to what degree the individual can work out his own salvation, whether, as Calvin contends, God does all, but only for His elect, or whether man is required to co-operate with grace offered to all. Richardson appears to expect his reader to perceive Lovelace's state as one in which he must bear, to a great degree, the responsibility to co-operate with grace. Evidence for this contention may be drawn from Richardson's remark in the Collection:

> God knows what he will forgive; but his forgiveness, however, depends, in a great measure, on the offenders themselves.(34)

Richardson's comment that Lovelace was too 'determined a Libertine' to be reformed, despite 'awakening Calls', suggests that Lovelace both knows what is required for salvation and refuses the Divine assistance which is extended to him.(35)

Lovelace's plea that habit and his stormy nature make resistance to sin difficult reflects a view that Christian theology would endorse. However, Richardson does not mean us to believe that resistance is impossible. The rape of Clarissa is pre-meditated, and not the result of a sudden impulse of passion. It would be no less a sin if it were, but Lovelace's premeditation suggests a sin coolly and rationally determined in the sense of which Aquinas speaks when he refers to fatal sin as attributed to reason. 'Sensuality', he tells us, 'can contribute to fatal sin, but what makes the sin fatal is not that contribution, but the contribution reason makes in ordering it to a goal'.(36)

Lovelace's tragedy lies in the fact that he does understand that what he does, and what he proposes to do, is sinful, and recognizes that his heart has been hardened by vicious habits. He recognizes that sin lies in the will, a perception that is demonstrated when he discusses the integrity of Clarissa's will:

> Her will is unviolated – at *present*, however, her will is unviolated. The destroying of good habits, and the introducing of bad, to the corrupting of the whole heart, is the violation. That her

> will is not to be corrupted, that her mind is not to be debased, she has hitherto unquestionably proved.(p.916)

The only true violation would be Clarissa's violation of herself, if her will consented to Lovelace's seduction. Lovelace implicitly acknowledges here that if Clarissa – admittedly unweakened by any habitual vice – can choose virtue, then such a choice is a possibility for all. However, as Clarissa herself pointed out, Lovelace from earliest youth has chosen otherwise and has thus made himself responsible for his weakened state. Richardson's contemporary, William Law, would have regarded Lovelace as choosing his own damnation, since Law asserts that God would be merciful to us for our failings and unavoidable weaknesses, but not for sin which we lacked the intention to avoid. He claims that if we fail to avoid sin through negligence or lack of will, we cannot expect mercy.(37) In the light of such a contention, Lovelace's reflections on his own habits of vice in the full knowledge of their sinful nature, and on his projected rape of Clarissa must suggest to the reader that his progress through life is a progress towards spiritual death.

If Lovelace can reflect upon the manner in which he has exercised his will, so Clarissa's reflections on the subject of her own exercise of the will both exonerate her from sin and acknowledge the part played in this exoneration by Divine assistance. She writes to Anna after the rape of the shock 'the greatest that I could receive', and adds that, since she had not been at fault, she hopes 'I am already got above it'.(P.1161) The assertion that she is not culpable of any wrong-doing, carries the implication that had her self-examination disclosed any violation of her will to virtue, she would not so soon be able to 'get above' the greatest shock that she could receive. She is aware, as is Lovelace, that she is essentially unchanged, in the spiritual sense, by her experience. Not only did she *not* will what befell her, she also strove her utmost to avoid any such evil. Both her resistance beforehand and the

failure of the experience to corrupt or weaken her will to virtue afterwards, Clarissa gratefully attributes to Divine assistance.

> Yet, I bless God, it has not tainted my mind; it has not hurt my morals ... My will is unviolated.(p.1254)

Clarissa's thankfulness to God carries an implicit recognition of the part that grace plays in relation to the will, and stands in marked contrast to Lovelace's failure to co-operate with grace to help him correct the habits of sin to which he has given room. Such a failure can have only one result:

> What is evil simply speaking is the evil of fault, which destroys our relationship to God as our ultimate goal and separates us from him.(38)

The unrepentant sinner is deprived of the experience of the presence of God and can only reflect on what he has lost. The pain of such a deprivation is compounded by the knowledge that it arises from his own freely-exercised choice. These are the pains which Lovelace claims to suffer while still living, but the extent of his spiritual blindness is revealed in that in acknowledging his sins against Clarissa, he seems unaware that he has also sinned both against God and against himself, and has thus created his own hell. Even at this point, however, grace in the form of a troubled conscience is extended to him; he could respond to it, but he never does so:

> If thou knewest that already I feel the torments of the damned, in the remorse that wrings my heart on looking back upon my past actions by her, thou wouldst not be the devil thou art to halloo on a worrying conscience which, without thy merciless aggravations, is altogether intolerable.(p.1333)

A well-established Christian tradition holds that sin brings its own punishment upon the sinner, a contention which Lovelace's pitiful

and spiritually perilous state painfully illustrates. St. Augustine considers that such a relationship of cause and effect in this instance is part of a Divine ordinance:

> For this is what you have ordained and so it is with us, that every soul that sins brings its own punishment upon itself.(39)

In such a state, or in seeking to avoid it, the individual has the resources of reason and grace. St. Augustine makes it plain that God gave man reason in order that he should choose good, but that the inherited frailty of fallen nature often hinders him from doing so, and so he draws penalties upon himself:

> He has made man a rational animal, consisting of soul and body; and when man sins, he does not let him go unpunished, nor does he abandon him without pity.(40)

Later, he adds:

> It follows that there is only one Good which will bring happiness to a rational or intellectual creature; and that Good is God ... In attaining this Good they find their happiness; in losing it they are sunk in misery.(41)

Those of Richardson's characters who understand this may eventually achieve that happiness which is proper to rational creatures, whatever difficulties or distresses afflict them in this temporal life. Those who do not so understand, or who choose to ignore this truth, and seek instead whatever presents itself to them as goods, whether sensual indulgence or material gain, are shown to experience the misery of which St. Augustine speaks, either in this world, or probably in the next, or in both. Christian theology recognises that the term 'reason', denoting a faculty peculiar to man, may be interpreted in a number of ways. Calvin distinguishes between the intelligence needed to conduct life on earth in matters of policy, economy, liberal studies and mechanical arts, and that concerned with righteousness. All men have a common capacity, in varying degrees, to learn the arts, and Calvin asserts that we should recognize this as a gift of God, because it *is* common.(42) Aquinas, too, finds one

application of human reason to relate to social and political aspects of life, and relates this application to the virtue of prudence:

> Prudence is for people entrusted with rule and government. ... But since every man's reason shares in government whenever he makes a rational decision, every man shares in prudence.(43)

In relating such a comment to Richardson's work, however, it is necessary to bear in mind that prudence exercised in the individual's government of life may be exercised rationally, but against the reason that determines action in accordance with the eternal law of God. The Harlowes are prudent in their plans for the aggrandizement of their family, but they do not act in accordance with reason. Christian theology uses the term 'reason' in a highly specialized manner in relation to man's spiritual life. In this sense, reason is a faculty of discernment or judgement which enables man to seek his final and true end, God Himself. St. Augustine acknowledges that man uses his God-given faculty of reason in the service of philosophy, the arts and the sciences.(44) but also in the supremely important task of attaining salvation. Writing of the development of reason in the mind of the individual until that mind is 'ready for the perception of truth, and able to love the good', he adds:

> This capacity enables the mind to absorb reason, to acquire the virtues of prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice, to equip man for the struggle against error and all the evil propensities inherent in man's nature, so that he may overcome them because his heart is set only on that Supreme and Unchanging Good. Man may indeed fail in this; yet, even so, what a great and marvellous good is this capacity for such good, a capacity divinely implanted in a rational nature!(45)

Richardson's presentation of his characters explores the use of reason, or the perversion of it, in two capacities essential to the attainment of that eternal goal, the ability to discern good and evil, and the mastery of the passions. However, he recognizes that human reason has suffered impairment; of all his major characters,

only Sir Charles Grandison is seen to exercise a judgement which rarely, if ever, fails in its reference to reason.(46) Richardson's own comment on Sir Charles, however, indicates that while his hero is to be taken as an example of what man may achieve, human nature is yet to be acknowledged faulty:

> The God of Nature intended not Human Nature for a vile and contemptible thing: And many are the instances, in every age, of those whom He enables, amidst all the frailties of mortality, to do it honour. Still the *best* performances of human creatures will be imperfect; but, such as they are, it is surely both delightful and instructive to dwell sometimes on this bright side of things.(47)

Richardson's conviction of this imperfection is better demonstrated in his presentation of his avowed saint, Clarissa, who is by no means faultless in her exercise of reason in either of its capacities, and is all the more credible, both as a character and as a saint for her failure. Her sanctity will be shown to lie in the struggle to transcend fallen nature, even if, in this life, nature must still *be* fallen, and Richardson's treatment of her shows that it is. In this respect, both she and Lovelace are in the same condition, but while Clarissa understands that her reason must be employed, as St. Augustine points out above, in the struggle to seek the Kingdom of Heaven, Lovelace, an intelligent and rational man, fails to understand that not to do so is a perversion of reason. St. Augustine acknowledges the lack of steadiness in the human capacity to adhere to this truth, but claims that to fail ultimately to do so must be accounted 'a perversion in this rational nature'. He adds:

> For it is created in such a privileged position that, though it is itself changeable, it can yet obtain blessedness by adhering to the unchangeable Good, that is, to the Supreme God; and, as we can see, it cannot satisfy its need except by attaining that bliss which only God can supply. Moreover, any perversion does harm to nature, which means that it is contrary to nature.(48)

Richardson's villainous characters do demonstrate such perversity, and he recognises that even the virtuous man or woman may act, at times, against their own

best spiritual interests. His villains all illustrate in their respective ways choices made against reason, and freely made, since the perversion of free will and the misuse of reason are inextricably linked.

Only in the pre-lapsarian state could a perfect relationship between reason and will exist, but Richardson's virtuous characters strive, insofar as fallen nature allows, to give reason the primacy in determining their choices of action, and in guiding their conduct. That they must, at times, inevitably fail does not, and should not, deter them from renewed struggle. Even Clarissa may fail in discerning her own motives when she agrees to correspond with Lovelace, while those characters with more damning failures to their accounts illustrate the effects of choosing the wrong conception of what is good and substituting for it material advantage or the satisfaction of lust, pride and self love. If reason is the defining quality of man, to abjure it and lose the joy of heaven which can only be the reward of an intellectual being, is to reduce humanity to the status of a beast. Thomas à Kempis imagines Christ speaking to His disciples of those who follow the pleasures of this world and abandon the pursuit of virtue, which Christian theology holds must also be the course of reason:

> Ah, how short-lived and false, how disorderly and base are all these pleasures. Yet so besotted and blind are such persons that, like dumb beasts, they bring death to their souls for the trivial enjoyments of this corruptible life![49]

Lovelace - all Richardson's sinners - demonstrate this 'besottedness' which is the perversion of reason. Clarissa recognizes the lack of reason in Lovelace's manner of life, in that being aware of the excellence of virtue, he yet chooses to live the life of a libertine. She writes to Anna on the subject, showing at once great insight into Lovelace's spiritual state and the dangers such a state represents, and an

appreciation of the distinction between a failure of reason as a result of that faculty's vitiated state, and a perversion of reason by its misuse or by defiance of its guidance:

> Allowing, as he does, the excellency of moral precepts, and believing the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, he can live as if he despised the one, and defied the other: the probability that the taint arising from such free principles may go down into the manners of posterity: that I knowing these things, and the importance of them, should be more inexcusable than one who knows them not; since an error *against* judgement is worse, infinitely worse, than an error *in* judgement.(p.183)

If Clarissa here recognizes a lack of reason in Lovelace's conduct, she also acknowledges that there would be an equal lack in her own, if she were to link her soul to that of a man whose own soul stands in such danger. Likewise, in her conflict with her parents, she understands that the morality governing human relationships must be based on reason, since she points out that she has resisted 'authorities so sacred' – authorities sanctioned and approved by God – because the powers of those authorities are 'unreasonably exerted'.(p.373) Of all Richardson's characters, Clarissa most convincingly demonstrates an increasingly refined comprehension of what it is to live in accordance with the eternal law, so that she achieves a state to which Christian theology, of whatever tradition, encourages the individual to aspire. To live thus is to live according to the highest conception of reason, and to comprehend the purpose of a divinely given faculty. William Law makes the point in the following words, but those words are based on a well-established Christian tradition:

> You must act according to right judgements of the nature and value of things; you must live in the exercise of holy and heavenly affections and use all the gifts of God to His praise and glory.(50)

Elsewhere, Law argues that 'there is nothing more to be feared than the wrong use of our reason',(51) a contention that points to the tragic results of misuse. If Clarissa triumphs because of her increasingly refined understanding of what reason requires, Lovelace exemplifies the tragedy of a rejection of reason's prescriptions; his

misuse or perversion of reason constitutes a rebellion against the Divine order, in which the faculty is designed to render man most like to God, and thus capable of loving his fellow-man and enjoying God:

> An image of the uncreated Trinity can be found in creatures with reason, who utter a word in their minds, and in whose wills a love issues, so representing God in species. In other creatures there is no such word–source or word or love.(52)

In using reason correctly, man fulfils both the requirements of the eternal law and of his own nature. Two Christian thinkers of differing persuasions and different periods sum up such requirements in statements that would leave the aspiring soul in no doubt as to the vital importance of the correct use of this faculty and of the part its exercise should play in leading man to his final destination. Aquinas claims that 'Reason's ultimate standard is the law we have in us by nature',(53) while over four hundred years later, Law asserts, 'True religion is nothing else but simple nature governed by right reason'.(54)

While Christian thinkers of whatever persuasion generally urge believers to live according to reason, they equally acknowledge the difficulty that reason might experience in governing the passions, since the delicate balance between reason and the passions had been disturbed by the fall. The loss of a state in which 'the lower appetites were completely subject to reason, and all feelings presupposed reasoned assessment'(55) has left man in a condition in which constant endeavours must be made in order to control those passions, now grown unruly. St. Augustine argues that uncontrolled passions bring man closer to the state of the demons, while the use of reason to control and direct passion, he claims, is the means of bringing the believer to his ultimate goal in the vision of God.

> The true religion bids us abjure all those movements of the heart, all those agitations of the mind, all those storms and tempests of the soul which in the demons make a raging sea of passion.(56)

That Richardson accepted the established Christian opinion of the dangerous and unruly nature of uncontrolled passions, and of the necessity for the individual to exert control by the use of reason and with the help of grace, is amply demonstrated in the presentation of his major characters. Of these, the virtuously inclined are shown as being in the course of struggling against such 'storms and tempests of the soul' of which St. Augustine writes, in order to secure their salvation, while those characters who do not restrain their impulses of greed, anger, lust and envy offer examples of the painful consequences of uncontrolled passion, both in this world, and – it may be presumed – in the next. It is made clear to the reader, without compromise, that the control of the passions is a necessity for the well-being of society as much as for that of the individual. It is made equally clear that the task of restraint may be painfully difficult in its execution. Writing of the composition of Pamela, he recognizes this difficulty:

> In my Scheme I have generally taken Human Nature *as it is*; for it is to no purpose to suppose it Angelic, or to endeavour to make it so. There is a Time of Life, in which the Passions will predominate.(57)

However, Richardson's virtuous characters are not seen to regard the difficulty of the task as an excuse for neglecting its accomplishment. Clarissa's awareness of the dangers of passion uncontrolled by reason is established at the very earliest stage of the novel when she expresses her fear that her brother's inability to control his passions has largely contributed to the enmity between the Harlowes and Lovelace.(p.49) Later, writing to her Uncle Antony, Clarissa reiterates her concern that her brother's lack of control not only compromises his own soul, but also the well-being of the whole household. She makes it plain that the Harlowes have encouraged

him in the gratification of 'passions which he is above attempting to control', and which he 'has been too much indulged in, either for his own good, or the peace of anybody related to him'.(p.152) If the family may be seen as a microcosm of society, as elsewhere Richardson claims that it is,(58) Clarissa's words suggest that Richardson sees that where there is uncontrolled passion, moral and social chaos can follow, and often do. Such a view is consistent with the teaching of Christ as to what it is that defiles a man, those uncontrolled negative impulses of the heart which damage both himself and others:

> But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man.(59)

Clarissa's criticism of her brother for the frailty of his human nature does not mean that she remains unaware of the frailty of her own. In his presentation of his heroine and her antagonist, Lovelace, Richardson offers a double portrait of the same passions of pride and resentment met in diametrically opposing ways. She is seen engaged in the struggle to subdue and transcend these passions; he is seen in the process of indulging them.

That Clarissa consciously engages in such a struggle is demonstrated by the evidence of her own analysis of her own heart and conduct. She acknowledges herself capable of anger and hatred, but adds that these 'are but temporary passions with me. One cannot ... hate people in danger of death, or who are in distress or affliction'.(p.678) It is clear that Clarissa has learned to subdue such negative passions by means of conscious effort from an early age. Her correspondence with Mrs Norton, her governess, as she approaches her death would seem to suggest the conclusion that the latter, whose letters emphasize both perseverance and resignation to the will of God, has been instrumental in assisting Clarissa to such triumphs over

herself. On the other hand, we learn that Lovelace was subject to no restraints in his early youth, but indulged in every wish.(p.74) The results of both training and lack of it are to be seen during the course of the novel as Clarissa and Lovelace live and die.

In a letter to the Duchess of Portland, Edward Young, poet and priest, expresses a well-established view of the relationship between religion and the passions:

> Consider ... wt is Virtue, and Religion itself? It is little more than curbing ye natural tendencys of our perverse Hearts.(60)

Religion, that is, living in accordance with God's eternal law, must stand opposed to the impulses of the heart. As the reader witnesses Clarissa's struggle to overcome what must be acknowledged as a natural response of anger and resentment following the rape, itself an act motivated by Lovelace's own uncontrolled passions of pride and revenge, Young's remark would seem to have application. Clarissa's reason tells her that the Christian believer must forgive injury, but the impulses of fallen nature are those of anger and hatred. The forgiveness she is able to extend to Lovelace on her deathbed represents a victory over that nature which has been shown to be achieved only with the greatest difficulty by constant effort to give primacy to the dictates of the Christian conscience, itself an expression of 'the law that is in us by nature'. That the reader may suspect an ambiguity in that forgiveness, of which Clarissa herself seems unaware, does not make the effort any less remarkable. No Christian theologian would question that such efforts to subdue such negative passions must be made by those who seek salvation. The words of the Gospel itself demand it:

> But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.(61)

To follow such a prescription makes demands on fallen nature that can only be fulfilled with the help of grace, but which must be made. However, Richardson, while acknowledging that this is the case, does not suggest the complete depravity of that nature, and in this respect follows the tradition of Christian thought which does not condemn the passions as being entirely negative, but which recognizes that they are an essential part of human nature, however disordered by the fall. Such negative passions as hatred and resentment must indeed be subdued, but appropriately directed by reason, the passions may be positive in the effect. 'Passion makes us prone to sin only when it is unreasonable', says Aquinas. 'Reasonable emotion is virtuous'.(62) This remark does not suggest that human nature is incapable entirely, even in its fallen state, of virtuous passion; what is required is the correct adjustment of passion and reason. The very composite nature of man must give such virtuous passion its due and positive place. The words of Young demonstrate that this view was acceptable to contemporary Christian thinkers:

> Think not our passions from corruption sprung
> Tho' to corruption now they lend their wings;
> That is their mistress, not their mother. All
> (And justly) reason deem divine: I see,
> I feel a grandeur in the passions too,
> Which speaks their high descent, and glorious end;
> Which speaks them rays of an eternal fire.(63)

Richardson's hero and heroines are capable of such virtuous passions. Sir Charles can declare that 'I live to my own heart; and I know (I think I do) that it is not a bad one'.(64) As one modern commentator has claimed, in the late seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth centuries, the heart, in the sense of mind, conscience, integrity and inner religious conviction, took on a more positive meaning, as the essential element of humanity.(65) Clarissa too, employs the term in ways which reflect such a contention. She tells Anna that her heart condemns the clandestine

correspondence which she has been drawn into with Lovelace.(p.117) In this sense the word 'heart' suggests the faculty of judgement. Elsewhere, Clarissa employs it to suggest that it is the seat of emotion, when she tells her friend that, in discussing her response to Lovelace, 'I wrote my heart, at the time'.(p.176) In this instance, Clarissa does not appear to know her own heart very well. However, she does recognize that passion itself may be both virtuous and positive. She tells Anna:

> Noble minds, emulative of perfection (and yet the passion, properly directed, I do not take to be an *im*-perfection neither), may be allowed a little generous envy, I think!(p.175)

The shifting meanings of the term 'heart' have their dangers. When Clarissa discusses with Anna the attributes of a desirable suitor, she concludes that 'the *heart* is what we women should judge by in the choice we make'.(p.181) It is open to question whether she here speaks of the man's heart, as the seat of virtuous passions which would make him eligible, or of the woman's as the faculty of discernment which enables her to choose worthily.

In the case of herself and of Lovelace she is deceived, since the virtuous passions she desires in a suitor rarely animate his heart, and her own has responded less as the faculty of judgement than as the seat of an unrecognised passion. If such error indicates, as St. Augustine claims that it does, that the total subjection of passion to reason cannot be achieved in this life, at least the individual may endeavour not to give way to negative passions. The Christian scheme which Richardson embraces allows for the cultivation of virtuous passions; Clarissa achieves a victory, incomplete as it may be, over the passions which oppose reason, and cultivates those impulses of the heart which accord with it. She is rewarded accordingly. Lovelace, as it will be seen, ignores those better impulses of the heart,

and indulges the passions opposed to the eternal law. He is accordingly punished, and probably eternally so.

St. Augustine's comments on the subject, mentioned above, stress that the state of perfection will be achieved when reason and passion are in their correct balance, when the impulses of the flesh oppose neither those of the soul seeking God nor the Holy Spirit itself. He adds:

> Now we cannot achieve this in our present life, for all our wishing. But we can, at least, with God's help, see to it that we do not give way to the desires of the flesh which oppose the spirit by allowing our spirit to be overcome, and that we are not dragged to the perpetration of sin with our own consent.(66)

Richardson might very well agree with both this comment and with that of Milton, that the passions 'rightly tempered are the very ingredients of virtue',(67) since in the Collection, he writes, 'our passions are given us for excellent purposes and may be made subservient to the noblest'.(68) However, he would also claim that for the passions to be 'rightly tempered', divine assistance is necessary, as St. Augustine contends. Christian theologians, apart perhaps from those who embrace a thorough-going Pelagianism, have generally acknowledged the necessity of divine grace to assist man in the control of negative passion and in the cultivation of virtue. St. Paul acknowledges that his conversion from persecutor of the church to its apostle was accomplished by the grace of God bestowed upon him (1 Cor. 15.10), and elsewhere that grace teaches him his duty to his flock (2 Cor. 1.12). Grace then, both reforms and encourages. Theologians have disagreed, however, on the extent to which grace, reason and will interact. St. Augustine's position moved from a belief in the co-operation of will and grace to belief in the doctrine that the will was incapable of movement towards goodness without the grace of God. Calvin takes the

same view[69] and asserts that grace is not given equally and promiscuously to all, but only to the elect through regeneration.[70] Another tradition acknowledges that man needs grace, but holds that it is extended to all.

> When his nature was integrated, man kept every commandment of the law in the sense that he did everything commanded; but now that his nature is disordered he can't even do that unless grace heals him. Neither then nor now could he keep the commandments lovingly and charitably without grace; and both then and now he needed God's help to activate and initiate his keeping of them.[71]

Richardson does not appear to subscribe to the Calvinist position since even his most wicked characters are seen to be offered grace if they will avail themselves of it, while his virtuous characters are seen to co-operate with the grace extended to them. As he points out in his letter to Lady Bradshaigh, quoted above, Lovelace persists in his villainy despite 'awakening calls', and even Mrs Sinclair, in her prolonged process of dying painfully, is shown to understand the necessity of repentance and is urged towards it by Belford, who might be seen in this instance as a divine messenger, but rejects the opportunity offered. Likewise, in a paragraph added in the third edition to Belford's comments on the difficulty of reformation for a rake, he reminds Lovelace that only grace can effect such reform, and asks him if he can read the word 'grace' without a sneer.[iv, pp.389-390] Richardson's virtuous characters show an awareness of the part played by grace in assisting their fallen human nature in its progress towards eternal life. They seek grace in times of trial and temptation, and give thanks for the gift that enables them to avoid the sins that would bring eternal death. What Thomas à Kempis has to say of grace has relevance to Clarissa's own experiences:

> The resolution of good men depends more on the grace of God than on their own wisdom, and they put their whole trust in Him in all their undertakings.[72]

Clarissa initially faces the temptation of relying too much on her own strength, and one lesson which she must learn, learned perhaps through grace itself, is that to attain eternal life, a goal which man has no natural ability to achieve,[73] the grace of God is required. Such grace may be solicited, but according to Thomas à Kempis, the believer must await God's judgement of the time at which it is to be bestowed, for the Divine wisdom is the best judge of how the soul shall be drawn to Him:

> Were grace always granted at once and to be had for the asking, the weakness of man could hardly support it. The grace of devotion must therefore be awaited with firm hope and humble patience.[74]

Clarissa's experiences lead her to reflect upon the Divine dispositions in the bestowal of grace. She comes to recognize that the trials which lead her to her early death, and to the 'happy end' which she confidently expects to be crowned by a heavenly reward, have been part of a Divine dispensation of grace. Her final letter to her father thanks him for the 'virtuous education' she received, which gave her access to Divine grace. Likewise her letter to her uncles acknowledges that grace may be dispensed in various ways. 'Some are drawn by love; others are driven by terrors, to their Divine refuge'.[p.1375] However, she also acknowledges in that same letter her fault in the past in not having recognized that the credit she attributed to herself for her virtuous inclinations belonged to the gift of grace bestowed on her:

> But perhaps I was too apt to value myself upon the love and favour of everyone: the merit of the good I delighted to do, and the inclinations which were given me, and which I could not help having, I was perhaps too ready to attribute to myself.[p.1375]

If Clarissa recognises that her sufferings have been the means of grace, their final effects are a grace in themselves in that she has been drawn to purge her soul of those defects of vanity and pride. Her response to those sufferings, a response which

has enabled her to endure them with patience and humility, may be seen as the effect of further grace bestowed on her. In The Imitation of Christ, Christ tells His disciple that 'they who freely and willingly serve Me, shall receive grace upon grace'.(75) This promise would seem to be well-illustrated in Richardson's presentation of his heroine, since in her final letter to her brother she tells him:

> God gave me grace to make a right use of my sufferings. I early repented. I never loved the man half so much as I hated his actions, when I saw what he was capable of. I gave up my whole *heart* to a better hope. God blessed my penitence, and my reliance upon Him. And now, I presume to say, I AM HAPPY.(p.1374)

In her sickness, Clarissa has shown the signs of grace that Christian theologians of varied persuasions would recognize. Jeremy Taylor remarks that only grace can make sickness tolerable, and only grace can turn it into a source of virtue, conferring 'ease and felicity'.(76) Clarissa's patience and charity on her deathbed turn the act of dying, if this comment is taken as valid, into a process which serves to demonstrate the operation of grace. Likewise that charity itself, as well as the forgiveness she extends to the Harlowes and to Lovelace, would suggest the effects of grace noted by Thomas à Kempis:

> And if heavenly grace and true charity enter in, there will be no envy or meanness of heart, nor will self-love retain possession. Divine charity overcomes everything, enlarging every power of the soul.(77)

This is certainly the state that Richardson intends for his dying saint, although the reader may be uncomfortably aware that in giving up 'her whole heart to a better hope', Clarissa may have unconsciously chosen death. However, the sentiment which she voices above expresses a view with which no theologian would disagree, that grace is required to prepare the individual for heaven, and that one sign of that grace is that the believer looks to heaven for felicity rather than to the things of this world.

Grace pays attention to things eternal, and is not attached to the temporal. The loss of goods fails to move her, or hard words to anger her, for she lays up her treasure and joy in Heaven, where none of it can be lost.[78]

3

Holy Living I : The Love of God

Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom. (Job 28.28)

In paying attention to 'things eternal', all Christian traditions agree, man must give primacy to the love and service of God. In the Old Testament, such was the first precept of the first tablet of God's commandments, and in the New Testament, Christ reiterates this primacy for His new dispensation (Mark 12.29-30). Moreover, the commands of the Law define man's relationship to God and to his fellow-man, and must be seen to be according to reason, since God Himself is their source, and they are an aspect of His ordering of all things. 'In Him', says St. Augustine, 'There is no weakness, no unreason, no injustice'.[1] Elsewhere, he tells us that love of God and the observance of His law are to be understood as establishing the standard of virtue:

> When a man's resolve is to love God, and to love his neighbour as himself, not according to man's standard, but according to God's, he is undoubtedly said to be a man of good will, because of this love.[2]

Such a view is endorsed by subsequent theologians. Aquinas argues that the chief intention of God's law is that man should adhere to God, and that man adheres to God most firmly by love; if he adheres by fear, he does so for the sake of avoiding the evil that would threaten as a result of omission, but if by love, he adheres for its own sake.[3] More simply, Calvin asserts that the doctrine of the law 'connects man by holiness of life with his God ... and makes him cleave to him'. He argues that holiness of life is comprehended under the two heads of love of God, and love of our neighbour.[4] Moreover, he asserts that what is contained in the two tablets of the law

'are, in a manner, dictated to us by that internal law, which ... is in a manner written and stamped on every heart'.(5) Such contentions about the relationship between love of God, love of man, reason and virtue are likewise to be found in the religious conduct books of Richardson's day, and examples may be taken from the works of two writers with whom he was acquainted as a printer. Patrick Delany writes that 'the Precepts of Christianity are perfectly agreeable to our human and reasonable nature. And admirably fitted to perfect and exalt it'(6), while William Law offers a comprehensive view of the duty of the Christian believer:

> He therefore is the devout man who lives no longer to his own will, or the way and spirit of the world, but to the sole will of God, who considers God in everything, who serves God in everything, who makes all the parts of his common life parts of piety by doing everything in the name of God and under such rules as are conformable to His glory.(7)

Such statements, offering a gloss on the formulations of the theologians, and recognising that the frame of reference for Christian conduct is the law of God, are consistent with Richardson's own views. His hero and heroines strive to conduct their lives by the observance of 'such rules as are conformable to his glory' in despite of their human frailty, and his own conviction that such observance must be the rule and aim of Christian life is expressed in a letter to Joannes Stinstra, his Dutch translator:

> May the Almighty bless you with Health and continued Vigor of Mind to prosecute your useful Designs, for his Glory, and the Benefit of a World that wants such an Instructor!(8)

Richardson's novels amply demonstrate the value he places on this doctrine which lies at the very heart of Christian belief, that man's purpose in life is to love and serve God and then his fellow-men. His characters may not always be presented as being consciously aware of that all-important, ultimate purpose, as man cannot be,(9) but they *are* presented as being liable to judgement by a Divine Creator in

accordance with the manner in which they have responded to its demands. More immediately Richardson, their human creator, offers them to the judgement of his readers, who are invited to evaluate the degree to which they demonstrate, or fail to demonstrate, a love of God, and love of their fellow-men.

No character in Richardson's novels doubts the existence of God, although such belief may lie dormant until fear of death, penitence, or need awakens it. Even Lovelace and his rakes do not deny the existence of God as an intellectual proposition; they merely ignore that existence and its meaning in relation to the welfare of their own souls until such time as one of the above circumstances should arise. However, for Richardson's hero and heroines, the service of God and the benefit of others are the mainsprings of their existence, whether or not they express such convictions about the purpose of human life explicitly. Moreover, they show themselves aware that the fulfilment of human existence is not to be sought in this world, and that true happiness lies beyond this life; their ultimate goal and reward is the Beatific Vision. In this respect their convictions are in accordance with the promises of the Gospel and with long-established Christian doctrine.

> But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.(10)

St. Paul's words on the subject of that fulfilment to come are echoed in subsequent codifications of this doctrine. St. Augustine discusses at length the manner in which the saints are to see God,(11) while Aquinas argues that the enjoyment of the vision of God is the specific kind of fulfilment which is appropriate to intellectual creatures.

> Man's ultimate happiness consists in his highest activity, exercising his mind, and if created minds can't see God then either men will never be happy or their happiness must lie elsewhere than in

> God. That is not only opposed to our faith but makes no natural sense.(12)

It follows that in this life, happiness must always be incomplete. Calvin too, asserts that the fulfilment of happiness may only be enjoyed in heaven, but only for God's chosen:

> If our Lord will share his glory, power, and righteousness with the elect, nay, will give himself to be enjoyed by them: and what is better still, will, in a manner, become one with them, let us remember that every kind of happiness is herein included.(13)

In moving towards this great goal, Richardson's hero and heroines are in no doubt as to how it must be achieved. Their daily lives must be given to the service of God and man, must be devoted to prayer and praise on the one hand, and to the strenuous pursuit of virtue, that is to say, living in accordance with reason, on the other. William Law, drawing on the Christian tradition accepted by all persuasions, reminds his readers of the relationship between reason and religion, and expresses such purposes of life that motivate Richardson's heroine:

> The short of the matter is this, either reason and religion prescribe rules and ends to all the ordinary actions of our life, or they do not. If they do, then it is as necessary to govern all our actions by these rules as it is necessary to worship God.(14)

Nor is there to be any abdication from such demands if life brings trials and suffering. Such eventualities in Richardson's novels are the tests which establish the adherence to the law of love and service by which his characters are judged. Clarissa's sufferings, first at the hands of the Harlowes, and then at those of Lovelace, do not render her exempt from the daily necessity to respond to the demands of that law. Richardson's presentation of the manner in which his hero and heroines approach the Christian imperatives of a life lived from day to day in the love of God and man is very much in accordance with the ancient Christian traditions,

mediated through the particular codification given them by the religious conduct books.

William Law's gloss on the commandment to 'love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind' (Matt. 22.37), requires that Christians spend every waking hour consciously devoted to this purpose, and whatever their degree or status, that they should actively seek to please God in daily activities designed to His service and to that of their neighbour. He acknowledges that grace is necessary to reach the standard of regularity of life which he claims should be the aim of every Christian, but he points out that it is because the individual lacks the sincere intention of pleasing God in all his activities that he falls into irregularities that could be avoided by 'the ordinary means of grace'.(15) Law's stern belief that the individual is saved or damned by his own efforts, assisted by those 'ordinary means of grace', or failing because of the lack of them, presents a stark, inexorable choice; he can avoid sin if he really wishes to do so. If he fails to avoid it, through negligence or lack of will, he cannot expect mercy. If Clarissa may be judged as being sure of salvation in the light of such prescriptions, Lovelace is just as surely damned as a man who is fully aware of the sinfulness of his conduct, but either unable, because of long habituation to vice, or unwilling to repent.

However, merely to avoid sin is not enough. The love of God and man demands strenuous and unremitting efforts. While Law recognises the difficulty of making such efforts, he nevertheless holds it as the duty of the Christian to do so. Of all Richardson's virtuous characters, Sir Charles and Clarissa approach the state of strenuous Christian endeavour which Law considers necessary, but Clarissa, unlike Sir Charles, is shown in the process of anxious self-examination, and her progress towards sanctity is defined by her struggle to overcome pride and resentment.

Daily life offers endless opportunities for those of Richardson's characters who may be seen as Christian exemplars, to offer service to God and to man, and this service is shown to be deliberately chosen and purposeful, a life-long commitment with every opportunity accepted and fulfilled. Christian life is not shown to exist in the mere bleakness of 'thou shalt not', but rather in the determination to use time, energy and resources in this service. To do this, Law argues that the Christian should propose to himself:

> Such rules as relate to the well-ordering of our time and the business of our common life. Such rules as prescribe a certain order to all that we are to do, our business, devotion, mortifications, readings, retirements, conversation, meals, refreshments, sleep and the like.(16)

Such a demand that the individual should impose rules on himself for the conduct of his daily life is underwritten by Calvin's assertion that the Christian should look to God in all that he does, and that this is the self-denial which will leave no place for pride and ostentation, for avarice, lust, luxury and effeminacy, which are all the result of self-love.(17) This prescription at once recommends a positive act of worship of God, and ensures the avoidance of sin by discipline of life. Such prescriptions as these meet with a committed response from Clarissa, since the reader learns that she follows them exactly. Anna Howe's eulogy of her friend, written after Clarissa's death, describes the way in which the latter exactly apportioned her time between prayer, works of charity, and domestic and social duties.

Anna gives a detailed account of the manner in which Clarissa passed the day, allotting little time to rest or to any activities which could be regarded as merely frivolous. From the moment of her early rising (thus fulfilling another of Law's prescriptions, that the Christian in health should rise early), Clarissa kept a strict account of her time. The rigidity of this scheme may appear excessive to the reader,

but when it is considered that the disciplined employment of time rests on the underlying notion that idleness is spiritually undesirable, and that virtuous activity has the dual purpose suggested by Calvin's comments, referred to above, Clarissa's conduct then appears in the light of an aspect of the conscious search for salvation. It is significant perhaps, that Lovelace and his crew of rakes have no regular occupation but pleasure, and that while he, like Clarissa, is an early riser and fills his day with activities, these are the activities of sin. Lacking that self-denial of which Calvin speaks, and failing to order his life for the sake of salvation, as Law recommends, sin, in the form of inordinate self love, enters in.

Both Lovelace and Clarissa have opportunities to serve God and man which are not given to all. They are both rich and freed from the necessity of daily labour to earn a living, and these advantages impose special obligations to which Clarissa responds and Lovelace does not:

> If you have time and fortune in your own power, you are obliged to be thus reasonable and holy and pious in the use of all your time and all your fortune.(18)

Clarissa's careful use of her time, and her judicious expenditure of her fortune in alms, may thus be seen to be in accordance with both reason and virtue. Lovelace's use of time in intrigue, and resources spent in the concoction of his plots is, conversely, opposed to reason, since neither God nor man is served thereby and his advantages are employed to evil purposes. Such dereliction of duty finds condemnation elsewhere, together with a warning of the painful effects on the sinner himself. Jeremy Taylor censures those who fail to undertake the responsibilities implicitly imposed upon them by high social rank, or by the possession of abilities which could be of service in public office:

> Some there are that imploy their time in affairs infinitely below the dignity of their person, and being called by God, or by the

> Republick to help to bear great burdens, and to judge a people, do enfeeble their understandings and disable their persons by sordid and bruitish businesse.[19]

Lovelace might not be called upon to 'judge a people', but his misuse of his very considerable powers of intellect and his energy render him liable to such censure. If the remarks of such commentators as Law and Taylor are to be taken seriously, such men as Lovelace stand in peril of God's judgement when they shall be called upon to account for the use they have made of their time. Taylor recognises that men of quality are at particular risk in the matter of the prudent employment of their time. He claims that those who have not been educated well enough to use their time profitably may be miserable and may fall into base company.[20] Lovelace, clearly a man of some learning, has not received the moral and religious education required to avoid such an eventuality, and choosing vicious company, makes it all the more vicious. On the other hand, the virtuous education for which Clarissa thanks her father in her final letter to him, has taught her to avoid such a fatal abuse of time.

If time is to be used wisely, to the glory of God, to the salvation of the individual's soul and to the benefit of his fellow-man, the most important, indeed the indispensable, use of that time must be in devotion to prayer, both private and public. Although none of Richardson's characters, however virtuous, appear to resort to prayer at three hourly intervals, beginning at six o'clock in the morning, as William Law urges the Christian to do, his hero and heroines are very regular in the matter of private and public prayer. Such prayers are never shown to be a merely formal exercise; the prayers offered by Clarissa spring from what Law would have called 'a state of the heart' and 'a lively fervour of the soul'.[21] While Law acknowledges that it is creditable for Christians to engage in trade and employments,

he asserts that they lose what is most valuable if they do not consider devotion as the most important business of life; a just proportion must be kept between the demands of this world and the true end of life.

Miss Howe's eulogy of Clarissa offers ample evidence that her friend admirably discharged these duties of daughter, mistress of servants and patroness of the poor in a manner which would satisfy the terms of Law's prescriptions as to what the Christian owes the world, and Clarissa's own letters give evidence of piety from the beginning. She is concerned with the performance of those duties as the fulfilment of the demands of religion. Her favourite visitor is her spiritual mentor, Dr. Lewen, and the deprivation of attendance at public worship when her family confine her to her room is important enough to her to merit a mention in her letters to Anna. However, it is as her sufferings increase, especially after the rape, that prayer in the form of meditations composed from the psalms and the Book of Job, becomes the means by which she at once expresses her desolation, and comes to terms with her experiences. As one modern commentator has remarked of the use she makes of these extracts:

> A narrative begins to emerge, in which her suffering ceases to be arbitrary, and takes on the character of a divinely sanctioned trial.(22)

Such prayers are both personal and private, in which Clarissa wrestles both with the dispensation of Divine Providence and with her own response to it, but this private communication with God and with herself becomes public when her meditations are bequeathed to Mrs. Norton, and shared by her with Clarissa's mother. These private prayers become at once a way in which she can convey to others her personal religious experience of suffering and redemption, and part of the means by which her story is told and presented. Moveover, there is another way in which these

prayers are double-edged, in that Belford records some of them in his letters to Lovelace, and the latter may apply to himself such reflections as:

> There is a shame which bringeth sin ...
> Cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little ...
> Deliver me, oh Lord from the evil man. Preserve me from the violent man.(pp.1201, 1221)

Clarissa's private prayers in this instance act as one of the 'awakening calls' of which Richardson speaks in his letter to Lady Bradshaigh, and incidentally offer a sharp rebuke to the sinner's conscience. However, prayer has many functions. Christianity has always recognised the necessity of intercessory prayer. Christ Himself prays that Peter may not fail in faith (Luke 22.32), for the restoration of Lazarus (John 11.41-42) and that those who crucify Him might be forgiven (Luke 22.34). The Christian church followed this example of intercessory prayer from the beginning. St. Paul asks the prayers of the brethren for himself (Romans 15.20-32). Intercessory prayer thereafter is enshrined in Christian tradition. 'So charity demands we also pray for others', says Thomas Aquinas. 'For sinners to return, and for just men to persevere and progress'.(23)

The religious conduct books popular in Richardson's day echo such sentiments. William Law points out the importance of intercessory prayers, which earn grace for the one who prays and for the person who is their object. There is no more obvious instance of such prayers in Richardson's novels than the prayers which Clarissa offers for Lovelace that he might be forgiven for the wrong he has done her. However, such prayers may earn grace for her, and are themselves evidence of grace *in* her, but since their efficacy must also depend upon some element of repentance in him, it is not easy to gauge their benefit to Lovelace. Law claims that the daily exercise of such prayer to benefit others will have an effect on the heart of the one who prays; it will become 'great and generous', eager to see all men happy in heaven

in the future, and concerned to relieve suffering in this world. More particularly, he urges the Christian to pray for sinners:

> For a frequent intercession with God, earnestly beseeching him to forgive the sins of all mankind, to bless them with his spirit, and bring them to everlasting happiness, is the divinest exercise that the heart of man can be engaged in.(24)

Clarissa's prayers for Lovelace are no less a divine exercise because they are concerned with the spiritual welfare of one man, and they recognise that he cannot be forgiven unless he repents. However, they are also an important element in the conquest of herself which she seeks. Such prayer, born of her struggle to overcome the resentment natural in a woman who has been so wronged, reflects Law's contention that intercessory prayer for others must have its effect on the soul of the suppliant. Clarissa might be seen as emulating Christ in praying for the man who may be said – indirectly – to bring her to her death, but she is at the same time aware of her triumph in doing so: 'I *do* forgive you', she writes. 'And may the Almighty forgive you too!'. Her letter also reminds him, however, that his treatment of her has been the means of her accession to glory.(p.1426) Prayer is a complex matter and the human motives which give rise to it are not always without ambiguities.(25)

This consideration also arises in the question of Clarissa's attendance at public worship. The Harlowes' refusal to allow Clarissa to attend church, fearing some gesture from Lovelace, or some attempt at communication, is not without justification, since Lovelace's first letter to Belford confirms that he had hoped to establish some relationship with the family as a means of access to Clarissa. Lovelace's motives for attendance at church are never those of devotion, but rather those of seduction. Indeed, Lovelace does not appear to understand the sincerity of devotion, since when Clarissa determines to attend church, taking a chair from Mrs. Sinclair's house, he comments that she does so 'not so much from a spirit of

devotion, I have reason to think, as to try whether she can go out without check or control, or my attendance'.(p.633) However, Lovelace's suspicions are – like those of the Harlowes – not entirely unjustified. Clarissa's motives are not those of simple devotion. On this occasion her attendance at church also tests, 'that I may be sure I can go out and come in when I please'.(p.640) The question of attendance at public worship has a place in the battle of wills between Lovelace and Clarissa.

Anna's eulogy of her friend, tells Belford that 'The SEVENTH DAY she kept, as it ought to be kept',(p.1471) acknowledging Clarissa's devotion both to the service of God and to works of charity. The approach of death offers Clarissa no dispensation from these imperatives. Dying, she drives her failing body out to nearby churches to attend prayers, well aware both of the duty imposed on the Christian of attendance, and of the spiritual benefits of public worship. To Anna, she explains what benefits there are in attending various churches at different hours of the day:

> This method pursued, I doubt not will greatly help, as it has already done, to calm my disturbed thoughts, and to bring me to that perfect resignation which I aspire after: for I must own, my dear, that sometimes still my griefs, and my reflections are too heavy for me; and all the aid I can draw from *religious duties* is hardly sufficient to support my staggering reason.(p.1140)

For the sake of such opportunities of frequent prayer, she tells Anna that she prefers not to remove from the town to Anna's own neighbourhood. Her preference suggests that she does indeed give primacy to the service of God above all other considerations, but the reader may equally suspect that these griefs and painful reflections may have already determined for Clarissa, without her conscious recognition of any such determination, a future course in which the presence of her friend and human comfort could only be dangerous distractions from the search for God, or death. Whatever Clarissa's desires truly are, what she *believes* them to be determines her conduct in relation to worship. Just as Lovelace's presence in church

and his reasons for his presence leave him in danger of the loss of his soul for perverting a place of worship into a place of assignation, so Clarissa's recognition that her Christian duty in attending is also the means of self-conquest offers the possibility of salvation:

> For according as our desires are, so are our prayers; and as our prayers are, so shall be the grace; and as that is, so shall be the measure of glory.[26]

To determine the nature of those desires, and whether they are in accordance with the dictates of the eternal law, and so need to be encouraged, or oppose it, and so require to be controlled and overcome, the Christian is recommended to undertake the practice of self-examination. St. Paul had declared the value of the practice to the early Church in his exhortation to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 13.5).

> Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?

If the post-Reformation churches abandoned the practice of sacramental confession, for which an examination of the conscience was a preliminary, the Protestant emphasis on the direct relationship between the individual and God gave a fresh impetus to the desirability of self-examination. As G. A. Starr points out, 'The conviction that every man is both enabled and obliged to scrutinize his own soul was widely shared'.[27] No less an authority than Calvin argues that self-examination inclines us to submission and later adds that we should employ the laws contained in the two tables so that we may look into ourselves, and see how far our conduct is from being in accordance with God's will.[28]

It may be concluded then, that self-scrutiny should lead the individual to a knowledge of the state of his soul, to an acknowledgement of sin and thus lead on to

an impulse towards repentance and to an appreciation of the graces bestowed by God. Moreover, self-examination should be a regular practice. Law argues strongly in favour of the Christian setting aside time each evening in which to review the day past and examine his behaviour. The reason for undertaking such a practice is based on the necessity for repentance, since he claims that the guilt of any sin unrepented must otherwise remain. Nor is a general repentance sufficient; the Christian must repent of particular sins and of each of them. Only in this way can he solicit pardon and God's grace to assist him, so as to avoid falling into such sins on the next and subsequent days.[29]

It is clear that Clarissa is accustomed to the practice of self-examination. Her correspondence with Anna is in itself a means of interrogating her own heart, since in seeking to be candid with her friend, she must first seek to be honest with herself. That both Anna and the reader may be conscious that she does not always succeed in this endeavour does not diminish the importance of the practice. Both women agree that true friendship requires not only honesty, but also the exercise of the charitable office of pointing out each other's failings so that these may be acknowledged and repented. Clarissa writes:

> I will love you the better for the correction you give me, be as severe as you will upon me. Spare me not therefore, my dear friend, whenever you think me in the least faulty.[p.135]

However, it hardly needs the impetus of Anna's possible criticism to motivate her friend to a stringent self-examination. Trained from her earliest years, as she reminds Anna, by Mrs. Norton's inculcation of Christian principles, and assisted by the spiritual counsel of Dr. Lewen, Clarissa's habitual practice would seem to be that of an earnest and demanding dissection of her own heart. Although she claims at one point that her heart is 'unexamined', the very terms of her claim argue against such a

contention, and suggest that she is well-accustomed to self-scrutiny: She writes to Anna:

> Your partial love will be ready to acquit me of capital and intentional faults – but oh, my dear! My calamities have humbled me enough to make me turn my gaudy eye inward; to make me look into myself! – And what have I discovered there? – Why, my dear friend, more *secret* pride and vanity than I could have thought had lain in my unexamined heart![(p.333)]

This is not the language of one unaccustomed to introspection. Just as Richardson's celebrated technique of writing to the moment gives an unprecedented immediacy to his novels, so his presentation of Clarissa's analyses of her own spiritual state strongly impresses the reader with the sense of witnessing a soul struggling with itself, and struggling with all the urgency of one who understands that upon the outcome of her self-examination her eternal welfare may depend:

> But let me stop: let me reflect! – Are not these suggestions the suggestions of the *secret* pride I have been censuring? Then, *already* so impatient! But this moment so resigned! so much better disposed for reflection! Yet 'tis hard, 'tis very hard, to subdue an embittered spirit! – in the instant of its trial too! – [(p.333)]

Clarissa fears that a failure to subdue her impatience may lead to yet more 'punishable errors'. If her self-castigation seems excessive to a reader who has already learned at this comparatively early stage in the novel to admire the earnestness of her moral endeavours, it must be acknowledged that it is by means of such searching self-analysis, especially after the rape which gives it fresh impetus, that Clarissa advances to sanctity by the acknowledgement of her errors and by the force of her repentance. Nor is such strictness in the searching out and acknowledgement of sin unprecedented among the saints. St. Augustine refers to the sins of his childhood as a 'whirlpool of debasement'[(30)] while John Bunyan feared the hot displeasure of Christ and grievous punishment for 'taking delight in all manner of vice' in his youth, defining 'vice' in this instance as breaking the Sabbath by

playing games.[31] In the light of such self-condemnation on the part of the saints, Clarissa's reflections on her 'embittered spirit' are very far from unprecedented, and hardly excessively rigorous.

> Calvin's claim that self-examination inclines the individual to submission, is echoed by Clarissa's association of reflection with Christian resignation. Both theologian and the heroine of Richardson's novel in these remarks implicitly acknowledge the role of Providence and the duty of the Christian to submit to its dispensations. Christianity had always acknowledged the role of Providence in overseeing and directing not only the operations of the universe, but also of the trivial details of daily life. Christ reminds His disciples of God's care even for the fowls of the air (Matt. 6.26), and St. Augustine offers a gloss on this assertion when he reiterates the role of Providence:
>
> > He has not abandoned even the inner parts of the smallest and lowliest creature, or the bird's feather (to say nothing of the heavens and the earth, the angels and mankind) ... [32]
>
> Both scholastic and reformed theology agree that Providence concerns itself with singulars as well as universals: Thomas Aquinas asserts:
>
> > For God has immediate knowledge of individuals, as knowing them not merely in their causes, but also in themselves ... Now it would seem unreasonable if, knowing individuals, He did not desire their order, wherein the chief good of things consists, since His will is the source of all goodness.[33]
>
> Calvin's account of Providence does not substantially differ:
>
> > The world is governed by God, not only because he maintains the order of nature appointed by him, but because he takes a special charge of every one of his works.[34]
>
> In Richardson's time, Deism questioned many traditional Christian doctrines, and among them that of the role of Providence. The God of the deists might have

established the laws of the universe, but thereafter the great machine operated according to those laws without His intervention in its operations, still less in the affairs of men.(35) Richardson, in his letters(36) demonstrates his antipathy to deistic doctrines, and in his novels explicitly expresses his belief in the long-established orthodox view of the role of Providence. Moreover, he accepted the notion that Divine Providence might permit evil or affliction for its own purposes, and that submission to its decrees was not only the Christian's duty but a means of salvation. In his Postscript to Clarissa he remarks 'We find that, (*in the dispensations of* PROVIDENCE) good and evil happen alike to ALL MEN on this side of the grave',(p.1496) and the reader sees the force of this contention reflected in the experiences of his heroine.

Clarissa is shown to be aware, at a very early stage in the novel, that Providence oversees and guides human affairs, and that resignation to its dispensations is an indispensable element in the Christian vocation. This is all that is required of a Christian, as Clarissa points out to Anna, even before the greatest of her trials has come upon her:

> What have we then to do but, as I hinted above, to choose right, and pursue it steadily, and leave the issue to Providence?(p.106)

However, choosing right, or defining what right is, may be problematic, as Clarissa later acknowledges. Having been tricked into accepting Lovelace's protection, she comes to identify a fault in herself of trusting too much in her own competence. Perhaps however, the reader may conclude that while Clarissa has not yielded to any 'disgraceful impulses' in her course of action, she has failed, and still fails, to be aware of that attraction which drove her to allow a connection with Lovelace at all:

> That such a vile character, which ever was my abhorrence, should fall to my lot! – But depending on my own strength; having no reason to apprehend danger from headlong and disgraceful impulses, I too little, perhaps, cast up my eyes to the Supreme Director; in whom, mistrusting myself, I ought to have placed my whole confidence! – and the more, when I saw myself so persistingly addressed by a man of this character.(p.565)

Clarissa's reason and her heart – in this instance not the faculty of discernment but of deception – have been at odds; it is clear that the hidden inclinations of the one have obscured the judgement of the other. However, if Clarissa should have cast the direction of her future course on Providence, it may be that Providence has allowed her error for its own purposes, a view to which Clarissa herself eventually accedes. After she has endured estrangement from her family, imprisonment by Lovelace, and rape, Lovelace reports to Belford a prayer that Clarissa offers, which acknowledges that while the ways of Providence may be unsearchable, they are always just, and which equally acknowledges the duty of submission:

> Great and good God of Heaven, said she, give me patience to support myself under the weight of those afflictions, which thou for wise and good ends, though at present impenetrable by me, hast permitted.(p.909)

While accepting that the dispensations of Providence may include affliction, and permit man to sin, Christian theology denies that God ever wills sin. This doctrine was challenged by Hume in his Treatise of Human Nature, where he argues that if God is 'the great and efficacious principle', and 'the author of all our volitions and perceptions', He also becomes 'the real cause of all our actions, bad as well as good, vicious as well as virtuous'.(37) The view of Christian orthodoxy of all persuasions concludes that God's Providence does not exclude man's voluntary actions: Calvin makes exactly this point:

> Thus we must hold, that while by means of the wicked God performs what he had secretly decreed, they are not excusable as if they were obeying his precept, which of set purpose they violate according to their lust.(38)

Likewise, Aquinas in discussing God's will states that 'God wills some goods more than others, but none more than his own goodness. So he cannot in any way will wrongdoing',(39) and elsewhere points out that the dispensations of Divine Providence embrace the liberty of the will:

> The last end of every creature is to attain to God's likeness ... It would therefore be inconsistent with divine providence if any thing were deprived of that whereby it attains to a likeness to God. But the voluntary agent attains to God's likeness in that he acts freely; for we have proved that there is free will in God. Therefore Providence does not deprive the will of liberty.(40)

Whatever differences in emphasis between pre- and post-Reformation theology, the point is established that the sinner is free to sin. Clarissa may recognize that God has permitted her afflictions, including the sins that Lovelace has committed against her, but it is Lovelace who has willed those acts. Lovelace's claim, therefore, that his conduct has been the indirect cause of good may be seen as a distortion of the ways of Providence, since he willed evil. God does not will evil so that good may result, Aquinas tells us 'but good follows from evil indirectly despite the intentions of the evildoer',(41) while Calvin remarks that, 'in his boundless wisdom [God] well knows how to use bad instruments for good purposes'.(42) Thus Lovelace's annexation to himself of a kind of Providential power could be seen not only as unreasonable, but blasphemous: He writes to Belford:

> Why prithee, now, Jack, I have not been so much to blame as thou thinkest: for had it not been for me, who have led her into so much distress, she could neither have *received* nor *given* the joy that will now overwhelm them all. So here arises a great and durable good out of temporary evil!(p.1235)

Lovelace, not God, must be seen as having brought about Clarissa's suffering, although Christian thinkers might well agree that he has been permitted to do so for God's own purposes. However, it is God, who by means of grace, will bring good from that suffering in Clarissa's sanctification, the edification of her friends, and in the conversion of Belford, which in turn has its indirect effect on a more hopeful future for Tourville and Mowbray, both in this world and the next. St. Augustine's opinions on the matter,[43] which make the point that God can and does bring good out of evil, were taken up by successive theologians:

> And Augustine writes that God is powerful enough to bring good from bad. If God did not permit bad, many goods would disappear ... Nor could we praise the righting of wrongs or the endurance of suffering if wickedness did not exist.[44]

This conviction, expressed above by Aquinas, is one which is shared by reformed theology. Calvin too quotes St. Augustine's[45] authority to support his own contentions on this same point. Christian theology, therefore, would see in Lovelace's assertion that he has indirectly brought about good, the implication that God has permitted him to exercise his free will, and has Himself not willed to prevent the evil that Lovelace perpetrates, since He will bring good out of it. Lovelace, then, is very much in the position of Satan in the Book of Job. God permits the testing of his servant, and Satan thereby becomes God's instrument in the final revelation to Job of His own glory, in the vindication of Job's own righteousness, and in his eventual renewal.

> And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath *is* in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD. (Job 1.12)

Likewise, the Satan of Paradise Lost, a work with which Richardson was familiar, is permitted by God to prosecute his evil on mankind as part of the Divine design to let him bring evil upon himself. God's Providence will bring forth 'infinite

goodness, grace and mercy'[46] on mankind, but Satan needs God's permission to act at all:

> So stretched out huge in length the Arch-Fiend lay,
> Chained on the burning lake; nor ever thence
> Had risen, or heaved his head, but that the will
> And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
> Left him at large to his own dark designs
> That with reiterated crimes he might
> Heap on himself damnation, while he sought
> Evil to others, and enraged might see
> How all his malice served but to bring forth
> Infinite goodness, grace, and mercy, shown
> On man by him seduced.[47]

Just as Milton presents the first man falling before the permitted temptation by Satan, so he shows the second Adam triumphantly resisting the same tempter. However, the Jesus of Paradise Regained is aware, as Adam is not, that God permits this temptation for the hidden purposes of His Providential design. Jesus tells Satan:

> Do as thou find'st
> Permission from above; thou canst not more.[48]

Satan himself has already recognized his own place in that same design 'For what he bids I do',[49] he acknowledges. Divine Providence has a place for the exercise of the sinner's will, whether that sinner is Satan or Lovelace, but the result, ultimately, may well be other than the sinner intends, since, as Calvin says 'in this way, while acting wickedly, we serve his righteous ordination'.[50] Lovelace's pride, in annexing to himself a kind of providential power does not take into account the all-embracing nature of Divine Providence itself.

Clarissa recognizes what the deistic theorists tended to deny, that God concerns Himself with the individual. 'God's eye is upon us!' she tells Lovelace in warning after the rape, 'His more *immediate* eye'.[p.951] However, she is equally aware that the intervention of Divine Providence into her own life, however painful its allowance for contingency in the exercise of Lovelace's free will may have

seemed, is to her ultimate benefit. The duty of the Christian is submission, and submission is a lesson which Clarissa's experiences enable her to learn. Both pre- and post-Reformation theology assert that the ways of Providence may be unsearchable but that they are in accordance with reason, although human rationality may fail to comprehend that this is the case: The Imitation of Christ urges submission to the designs of Providence in words which Clarissa's own experiences might seem to illustrate:

> Do not argue why this person is so forsaken while another is endowed with great graces; or why one person is so grievously afflicted, while another is so richly rewarded. These things are above human understanding, and neither reason nor argument are competent to explain the judgements of God.(51)

Equally, Calvin points out that we may not always recognize the reason for the dispensations of Providence(52) but concludes that these would be found to be, if we could only come to understand those purposes, consistent with reason:

> It is true, indeed, that if with sedate and quiet minds we were disposed to learn, the issue would at length make it manifest that the counsel of God was in accordance with the highest reason, that his purpose was either to train his people to patience, correct their depraved affections, tame their wantonness, inure them to self-denial, and arouse them from torpor.(53)

Clarissa's final and dearly-achieved response to her sufferings is at once to acknowledge the unsearchable nature of the workings of Divine Providence and her own duty of submission. Such submission does not come without a struggle. Despite her momentary fear that she may not be able to sustain her lot without repining, and may conclude that God's punishment exceeds the seriousness of her fault, she comes eventually to place her trust in Divine wisdom, and to accept that her experiences have been part of a Providential dispensation:

> The ways of Providence are unsearchable. Various are the means made use of by it, to bring poor sinners to a sense of their duty. Some are drawn by love; others are driven by terrors, to their Divine

> refuge. ... and now, being led to account for the cause of my temporary calamities, find I had a secret pride to be punished for, which I had not fathomed: and it was necessary perhaps that some sore and terrible misfortunes should befall me in order to mortify my pride and my vanity.(p.1375)

Clarissa's reflections might be seen as a re-statement of the remarks of Calvin. Her suffering has led her to accept the validity of a Divine dispensation, directed towards her ultimate good by a just and merciful God. If the reader might consider that Clarissa, while she did not choose her suffering at the hands of Lovelace, *has* in a sense chosen the early death which she regards as part of a Providential dispensation, Richardson clearly intends his heroine's fate to be seen as an illustration of the unsearchable ways of Providence. Moreover, the theologian might argue that Providence includes in its dispositions allowances for the blindness of a frail human nature which does not always understand itself and its own motives in the exercise of its will, nor, in its fallen state, recognize that its will may be divided.

The submission which Richardson presents his heroine as being possessed of is that which Christian tradition would recognize as both desirable and necessary to the hope of salvation, and has been achieved by a struggle to accept suffering apparently arbitrarily and certainly undeservedly imposed. Clarissa's final letter to Mrs. Norton which the 'editor' of Clarissa merely records without transcribing, asks that lady to rejoice in her present situation, 'exulting in the mercies of a gracious God who has conducted me through the greatest trials in safety, and put so happy an end to all my temptations and distresses'.(p.1406) Both Richardson and Clarissa require their readers to understand that it is in the love and service of God that man's duty lies, and that although that love and service may require suffering, trust in Divine

wisdom and submission to the dispensations of Providence are the means to unending joy.

4

Holy Living II : Charity

If to love and serve God is the primary purpose of man's existence, and if it is according to reason to do so, it is equally reasonable that such love and service should be indispensably and inextricably linked to the love and service which should be directed towards fellow-men. St. Augustine remarks that while it is easy to be well-disposed towards those who have done us no harm, to do whatever good can be done towards those who wish us ill, and would do us ill if they could is 'a matter of magnificent generosity'(1) which is endorsed – required – by the Gospel. In making such a comment, he implicitly recognizes that according to the rationality of the world, to return good for evil makes no sense, but according to the eternal law which links God and man in charity, nothing could be more reasonable; the love of God must necessarily annexe to itself the love of man. Thomas Aquinas points out:

> But charity has only one goal – the goodness of God – and one shared life – eternal happiness – so there is only one type of charity, which loves God in the first place and our fellow-men for God's sake.(2)

Likewise, post-Reformation theology makes clear the inextricable relationship between love of God and love of fellow-men. Calvin asserts that no man 'observes charity in all respects unless he seriously fear God', and adds that St. Paul 'makes the whole perfection of the saints to consist in charity'.(3) Holiness of life, he tells us, is comprehended under the two heads of the love of God, and love of our neighbour.(4)

To Richardson's hero and heroines, the duty of charity is all-demanding and all-embracing in that it is part of their relationship to God, who cannot be loved and

served in isolation, without love and service being extended, in a variety of ways, to His creatures. In presenting the charitable conduct of Clarissa, Sir Charles and Pamela as resting on the basis of love and service to God, Richardson's understanding of the nature of charity is far removed from the contentions of philosophers who located the origins of such conduct in social utility or in a disguised or extended self love.(5) Nor does he appear to find feeling rather than reason the origin of charity.(6)

Clarissa does not always find that her feelings are consistent with what she regards as her Christian duty, notably in the case of her struggle to subdue her anger and resentment towards Lovelace in response to the Gospel injunction to forgive. She may frequently refer to the necessity to have a good heart (and fear that Lovelace has a bad one) but Richardson makes it clear that even in the most virtuous and well-disposed of mortals, the reality of fallen nature may render that organ unreliable as a guide to conduct. Goodness of heart requires an education in principles of virtue, which Clarissa has received at the hands of Mrs. Norton and of Dr. Lewen. When the natural impulses of the heart oppose charity, when Clarissa feels resentment and anger towards Lovelace, then the dictates of her Christian conscience, themselves founded on the eternal law and endorsed by the Gospel, tell her that salvation depends on resistance to those impulses. The Christian is told that to be forgiven, he must first forgive. He is not told that it is easy to do so, and Richardson's presentation of Clarissa's struggle to forgive Lovelace makes abundantly clear both the difficulty of adhering to this law of charity and his own acceptance of the necessity of doing so.

While this aspect of charity is problematic and requires further examination, other manifestations of this necessary virtue are not neglected by Richardson's

heroine. Clarissa responds to the injunction to love her neighbours by offering alms to relieve their physical needs. Praises for a positive response to such a requirement pre-date Christianity:

> For the poor shall never cease out of your land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land. (Deut. 15.11)[7]

The Gospel strongly endorses the practice (Matt. 6.1-4) as does St. Paul (1 Cor. 16.1-3; 2 Cor. 8-9), so that charity in this form becomes an indispensable expression of the Christian response to the injunction to love one's neighbour. Moreover, while such acts of charity should be undertaken for the sake of the love of God and of fellow-men, they benefit not only the recipient, but the giver. St. Augustine makes this very point:

> My God, you have taught me to distinguish between a gift and its fruit. The gift is the thing itself, a necessity of life given by one man to another. It may be money, food, drink, clothing, shelter, or help. But the fruit is the good will, the right will, of the giver.[8]

Clarissa enjoys the blessings of the poor for her acts of charity, and clearly regards the performance of these as both a duty and a source of personal satisfaction. She is, however, aware of the spiritual benefits to be gained by dispensing alms, and tells Arabella that her money is 'out at interest', adding, 'And I hope it will bring me interest upon interest!'.[p.195] Arabella's response to this pious hope is to sneer at her sister as one who seeks the blessings of the poor. It is true that such charitable activities may well have spiritual dangers, encouraging in the donor a complacency or undue self satisfaction. Calvin reminds his readers that alms-giving should not be accompanied by pride or disdain,[9] and that the Christian should regard himself as the steward of whatever material advantages God has bestowed upon him. His remarks echo those of St. Augustine, although they have a slightly different

emphasis, while Clarissa's readiness to relieve the poor is equally consistent with the prescriptions of both theologians.

Calvin asserts:

> Let this, then, be our method of showing good-will and kindness, considering that, in regard to everything which God has bestowed upon us, and by which we can aid our neighbour, we are his stewards, and are bound to give account of our stewardship; moreover, that the only right mode of administration is that which is regulated by love. In this way, we shall not only unite the study of our neighbour's advantage with a regard to our own, but make the latter subordinate to the former.(10)

When Clarissa is brought to contemplate a possible marriage with Lovelace, her remarks on the manner in which she proposes to devote to charity the tenth of her income, some of which would derive from his proposed, and liberal, allowance, deny any motives of pride or display in her charitable activities. However, her generosity is combined with prudence in that she discriminates in the matter as to who should be the recipients of her charity.

> I aim at no glare in what I do of that sort: all I wish for is the power of relieving the lame, the blind, the sick, and the industrious poor, whom accident has made so, or sudden distress reduced. The common or bred beggars I leave to others, and to the public provision. They cannot be lower: perhaps they wish not to be higher: and, not able to do for everyone, I aim not at works of supererogation.(p.655)

Such prudent discrimination in the dispensation of charity is consistent with Calvin's condemnation of indiscriminate alms-giving, and his encouragement of church authorities to visit every family regularly to ascertain whether its members were idle or drunken. Such a view was based on the value which Calvinism placed on industry.(11) However, it is also a view which was held by some secular authors, suggesting the dissemination of this aspect of the Protestant ethic. Mandeville comments on the dangers of undiscriminating generosity:

> Charity, where it is too extensive, seldom fails of promoting Sloth and Idleness, and is good for little in the Common Wealth but to breed Drones and destroy Industry. (12)

Richardson may have been familiar with Mandeville since Lovelace echoes that writer's comment 'That private vices are public benefits',(p.847) but the writers of the religious conduct books popular in his day may well have been his immediate source for Clarissa's discrimination in matters of charity, and the most likely disseminators of this aspect of the Protestant ethic of industry. Jeremy Taylor advises that alms should not be given to 'vitious persons' if such charity will encourage their idleness and support their sins by being spent in 'drunkenness or wantonness'.(13) Likewise, Patrick Delany, while urging that the Christian should err on the side of mercy at the risk of relieving the undeserving, rather than risk neglecting the deserving recipient, offers a caution:

> The vagrant beggar is an eternal exception, to all the precepts, and dictates of Christian charity. The race of vagrant beggars are the vilest race, that ever cursed the earth. Every penny given to the vagrant beggar, is so much taken away from honest industry, and Christian charity: taken away from Christian Charity, and given away to idleness, and lewdness: to vice, and villainy, to abominations and corruptions of every kind: in one word, it is so much of our substance withheld from God, and dedicated to the devil.(14)

In the light of such stern warnings, the discrimination which Clarissa displays, and the dispositions of her will in favour of 'the honest, industrious, labouring poor only' or of 'honest people of large families'(P.1419) are surely meant by Richardson to be seen as an admirable example of generosity balanced by prudence, of which the Christian reader could, and should, approve. If Clarissa required a precedent for her choice of charitable objects, she might find it in the advice given by Taylor that the best such objects are 'poor housekeepers that labour hard and are burdened with many children'.(15) Moreover, she does as Taylor urges in dispensing charity at first hand, wherever possible, since Anna's account of her tells Belford, and the reader, that she personally visited the poor and needy.

Although Clarissa points out that encouragement to worthy persons 'may set the wheels of their industry going, and put them in a sphere of useful action',[p.1419] it appears that her impetus towards the relief of the poor is intended to be seen as driven by religious motives rather than by those of a secular social philanthropy intended to render such people more productive as members of society. Clarissa's conduct in this aspect of Christian living follows closely the prescriptions of the religious conduct books. Likewise those conduct books have much to say about the duties of the rich in relation to their poorer brethren; they are assumed to have the duty of acting as stewards of the wealth that God has bestowed upon them. William Law, argues that Christians need to use their estates and fortunes with 'religious exactness', because such properties are as much the gifts of God as hands and eyes; since the use of estates and fortunes constitutes such a great part of our lives, to use them well or badly is to live well or badly. Therefore the waste of estates and fortunes is, in a manner, robbery of those who could benefit from them. 'We waste that which might be made as eyes to the blind', he says, 'as a husband to the widow, as a father to the orphan'.[16]

To waste property is not only foolish from a worldly point of view, since ruin could follow, but sinful, and could not only deprive the poor of relief but also the rich sinner of a heavenly reward. Conversely, Law points out that using property to dispense alms offers benefits to the donor, not perhaps the gratification of receiving the thanks of the poor or the admiration of friends (Clarissa does not go without such benefits), but a more lasting reward in heaven.[17]

While Law might well approve of the manner in which Clarissa uses her fortune, he might equally have censured the contrasting use that Lovelace makes of his. One of Lovelace's virtues is that he is a generous and just landlord. He is not

imprudent in the management of his affairs, but he is not shown to have any regular interest in charity. More seriously, in the light of the Law's claim that money spent badly not only deprives those in need of the benefits it might procure, but also corrupts the heart of the one who so uses it, Lovelace stands in danger both of censure and of Divine displeasure. It is impossible in the light of these remarks not to think of the ways in which Lovelace spends his money, and to what ends. He lays out large sums to assist him in the process of seduction and complains ruefully to Belford of the cost of hiring the jewels necessary to adorn the supposed Lady Betty and Cousin Montague. With an irony that will redound on himself, he adds, 'This sweet girl will half ruin me'.(p.875) By the use of his money for a purpose which is intrinsically evil, he is in a fair way, according to Law, to ruin himself.

The duties of stewardship do not cease with the life of the donor, which Clarissa recognizes when she takes steps to ensure, in her will, that she will continue to dispense alms through the agency of Mrs. Norton. Jeremy Taylor points out that testamentary donors benefit themselves spiritually by giving alms, as well as the recipients:

> Let thy charity out-live thee, that thou mayest rejoyce in the mansion of rest, because by thy means many living persons are eased or advantaged.(18)

He adds that as little as possible should be entrusted to executors, as far as exact dispositions are concerned, so that it will be the testator who exercises the charity of stewardship. Clarissa takes care to be exact in her dispositions, so that the provisions of her will are both binding and unambiguous. In this respect, she would seem to offer a positive response to Taylor's recommendation that the testator should ensure that charitable donations should out-last the funeral, and that prudence, not vanity, should be exercised in the distribution of alms.(19) Moreover, in her case there

would be no need to hope, as some testators vainly do, that charitable dispensations might go some way, at least, to buy remission for any sins committed. St. Augustine had warned that alms-giving cannot bribe God to allow sins to be committed with impunity,[20] and similarly Taylor sternly dismisses the idea that testamentary donations can constitute a payment for sin. Alms are not 'proper instruments of redemption, but instances of supplication, and advantages of prayer'.[21]

Richardson's work implicitly acknowledges that the Christian must show concern not only for the physical well-being of his fellow-men, but also for their spiritual welfare, and that he must not practise against their peace. As the expanded version of Anna's eulogy of her friend in the third edition amply demonstrates, Clarissa responds to the prescriptions of charity in both aspects. She relieves the physical needs of the poor not only by alms, but also by contributing to the education of poor children, and by finding work for them. At the same time, she provides both moral instruction and good books to the benefit of their souls.[iv, pp.502-503] In doing so, she acts in accordance with at least one strain of Christian thought as to what constitutes charity.

Calvin argues that the Christian must do what he can to promote his neighbour's tranquillity, and adds that since God's law provides so carefully for the physical safety of fellow-men, far greater care is due to his soul, which is of immeasurably greater value in the eyes of God.[22] Clarissa early suspects that this interest in the welfare of others is lacking in Lovelace, a suspicion which will prove to be justified. When she writes of this concern to Anna, she expresses her apprehensions that Lovelace lacks a heart; the word 'heart' here takes on a meaning expressive of a virtuous and benevolent disposition:

> But I used then to say, and I still am of opinion, that he wants a *heart*: and if he does, he wants everything. A wrong *head* may be convinced, may have a right turn given it: but who is able to give a *heart*, if a heart be wanting? Divine grace, working miracle, or next to a miracle, can only change a bad heart. Should not one fly the man who is but *suspected* of such a one?(p.184)

Lovelace's lack of a heart indicates also a lack of that charity which wishes well to his fellow-men. This makes him dangerous, because that void is filled with self-love, and it is a variety of self-love which charity opposes. Its converse, according to Law, who uses the word 'heart' in the same manner as Clarissa, is that charity which makes man like to God:

> There is no principle of the heart that is more acceptable to God than a universal fervent love to all mankind, wishing and praying for that happiness, because there is no principle of the heart that makes us more like God, who is love and goodness itself and created all beings for their enjoyment of happiness.(23)

To act thus, says Law, is to act according to 'the highest notion we can form of a man', in using finite faculties, as God uses His infinite faculties, for the welfare of His creatures, for the good of fellow-men. Lovelace is, then, opposed to this 'highest notion we can form of a man', since his conduct and all his faculties, so far from being directed to the good of others, are generally directed towards their corruption, degradation, and likely loss of their eternal welfare. Lovelace's conduct may be seen as a failure of love in the sense in which Law uses the word; for Law, love is not a matter of natural affection, nor the expression of any sensual passion; it is a settled disposition allied to reason and will. In this sense Lovelace may be seen to be love-less:

> By love, I don't mean any natural tenderness which is more or less in people according to their constitutions, but I mean a larger principle of the soul, founded in reason and piety, which makes us tender, kind and benevolent to all our fellow creatures as creatures of God, and for his sake.(24)

The love of which Law speaks is a faculty of the heart in the way in which Clarissa uses the term in the letter to Anna quoted above. Love of this kind, not dependent on natural feelings so much as 'on reason and piety' is that of which St. Paul writes in his characterization of charity (1 Cor. 13) and which St. Augustine regards as part of 'an ordered obedience in faith in subjection to everlasting law'.(25) Such a love can only be based on an appropriate self-love. St. Paul points out that all the law is fulfilled in the injunction to 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' (Gal. 5.14). St. Augustine likewise reminds his readers that alms-giving must begin with the self:

> There is a certain sort of almsgiving which a man owes as a gift to himself in the first instance, and by which the things within are made clean.(26)

It is because Lovelace does not have such mercy on his own soul and is not therefore 'made clean' within, that he is shown not only to lack charity towards his fellow-men but also to do them positive physical and spiritual harm. When Lovelace uses the term 'heart' he may well do so in a sense opposite to that of Law's reference to the cultivation of principles which are pleasing to God. 'All's right as heart can wish!', says Lovelace when he has tricked Clarissa into returning to Mrs. Sinclair's house, and prepares his act of rape.(p.877) To gratify a self-love founded in pride, he forgoes a self-love which is founded on reason, and therefore cannot exercise charity towards others. Clarissa's pleas for mercy, despite Lovelace's claim that her sighs went to his heart, must inevitably be in vain, since for Lovelace, to take pity on both himself and on Clarissa would be a folly which he rejects:

> Why then should this enervating pity unsteel my foolish heart? – It shall not. All these things will I remember; and think of nothing else, in order to keep up a resolution which the women about me will have it I shall be still unable to hold.(p.879)

Lovelace acts against reason when he acts against charity, both to himself and to Clarissa, whereas, as Law points out, the self love which keeps the individual

'tender, compassionate and well-affected' to himself is 'just and reasonable'.[27] Without such self love, he cannot be compassionate to anyone else. The kind of self-love which makes Lovelace frequently exalt his own brilliance and his superiority of person, intelligence and accomplishments, is the opposite of a just and reasonable self-love, and leads to contempt, not love, for his fellow-men.

It is because Clarissa has enough charity towards herself to consider her own eternal welfare that she can forgive Lovelace. A love of fellow-men founded on reason and piety rather than on constitutional tenderness will be extended, if not always easily extended, to those whose behaviour might naturally call forth disgust, anger or abhorrence. Such love will be able to forgive where constitutional tenderness might fail. Whatever natural feelings might be the response to injury, forgiveness as an act of charity must be chosen, striven for, and freely offered; there can be no appeal from this stern prescription, however hard the practice. Clarissa's struggle shows that it may only be achieved by means of grace. Self-interest alone might dictate forgiveness, since the Gospel enjoins the Christian to forgive so as to be forgiven, but Richardson's heroine, while recognizing the inexorable nature of this injunction, is enabled to go further and to concern herself with the spiritual welfare and ultimate destination of the man who has injured her. She understands that Lovelace stands even more in need of God's forgiveness than of her own if he is not to be lost, and urges him to repentance.

It is in his presentation of Clarissa that Richardson offers his most comprehensive analysis of the nature of forgiveness and of the struggle that is both necessary and inevitable before the Christian soul can forgive fully, and forgive solely from the spirit of charity which is founded on the love of God. Clarissa must

forgive the man who has abducted and raped her, and the family who have oppressed, rejected and cursed her. To be able to forgive such treatment approaches that heroism of virtue which is considered to be one of the characteristics of sanctity.

Such heroism is not to be achieved without a struggle, and Richardson's honesty of presentation leaves open to question whether fallen nature, even in the saint, may achieve it completely. Without the grace of God, it is hardly to be achieved at all. Clarissa is shown to experience all the natural resentment of one who knows herself both innocent and wronged. After the rape, and after her second escape from Lovelace, she writes to Mrs. Norton, torn between the demands of her acknowledged duty to forgive, and an equally insistent natural impulse to appeal for vindication and for Divine vengeance on those who have wronged her.

> Yet to God Almighty do I appeal, to avenge my wrongs, and vindicate my inno-
>
> But hushed be my stormy passions! ... May *those* be forgiven who hinder my father from forgiving *me*![p.987]

Later in the same letter, when resentment once more threatens to overwhelm her, she checks herself again. Nothing could more clearly demonstrate that true forgiveness is only to be purchased at the expense of an intense and painful effort, and that it shows not meekness and passivity but an active and passionate soul. When St. Augustine writes of forgiveness, he acknowledges the difficulty it presents for fallen nature, and says that to follow the injunction of the Gospel to love your enemies is 'characteristic of the perfect sons of God', and adds that forgiveness of this order is:

> An ideal towards which it is every faithful person's duty to hasten, training his human mind to this attitude by prayer to God and by reasoning and wrestling with himself.[28]

Implicit in such a statement is an assertion that forgiveness, difficult though it is, is the reasonable response to injury, because it is the response which God wills the Christian to make. The charity which Clarissa demonstrates when she wrestles with herself to overcome her resentment towards Lovelace can only be based on a love of God and assisted by application to Him in order to overcome the disordered tendencies of fallen human nature. That only a love for God can be the basis of such forgiveness is acknowledged by Thomas Aquinas:

> So great can be our love for a friend that for his sake we love those connected with him, even those who hurt and hate us. And this is how the friendship of charity extends even to our enemies, loved for the sake of God, our chief friend.(29)

If St. Thomas argues for the love of God as the basis of forgiveness, Calvin asserts the Christian's need for that same God's support in order to forgive at all. 'The Lord will give us strength', he says 'To observe a law which makes such demands on our weakness'.(30) In response to her family's enmity Clarissa learns to offer love for the sake of God, and for the sake of her own salvation. She gives blessings in response to their curses, even when they deny a last blessing themselves:

> God Almighty bless, preserve, and comfort my dear sorrowing and grievously offended father and mother! – And continue in honour, favour, and merit, my happy sister! – May God forgive my brother, and protect him from the violence of his own temper, as well as from the destroyer of his sister's honour!(p.1197)

The whole history of Clarissa's struggle to forgive, in the context of her sufferings, bleakly illustrates that the Gospel injunction makes demands, which are both inexorable and heroic, on the believer who aspires to respond to them. That Gospel injunction ends with a command to 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect'(Matt. 5.48). This command suggests that men must endeavour to behave as God behaves, that they should attempt to approach an impossible ideal, for the weakness of human nature precludes such perfection.

However, the Christian is expected to recognize that the near impossibility of the ideal does not invalidate the command to forgive; fulfilment must at least be – strenuously – attempted. This is the ideal which Clarissa attempts to reach, and it may only be approached by painful stages until she is able, finally, to declare that she sincerely forgives Lovelace, and dies 'in perfect charity with *all the world*'.(p.1413)

The Clarissa who confronts Lovelace immediately she recovers her mental equilibrium after the rape is not yet the Clarissa who dies 'in perfect charity with all the world', but a young woman who has responded to the wrong that he has done her according to merely human notions of justice and lawful vengeance. 'The LAW shall be all my resource', she tells him.(p.950) This is a Clarissa who can declare with scorn, 'from my heart I despise thee, thou very poor Lovelace!'.(p.950) Yet, within a few weeks, after still further suffering which befalls her as the indirect result of all his crimes against her, the process of learning to forgive has begun. Clarissa's feelings are ambivalent, torn between bitterness and a consciousness that forgiveness, however hard to achieve, is incumbent on the Christian. She herself recognises this ambivalence, but the prolonged struggle towards the perfection of charity which she finally claims to have achieved has been initiated. Belford reports that struggle to Lovelace, recording Clarissa's words:

> Let him know, sir, only one thing, that, when you heard me in the bitterness of my spirit most vehemently exclaim against the undeserved usage I have met with from him, that even *then*, in *that* passionate moment, I was able to say (and never did I see such an earnest and affecting exaltation of hands and eyes), Give him, good God! repentance and amendment; that I may be the last poor creature who shall be ruined by him! – and, in thy own good time, receive to *thy* mercy, the poor wretch who had *none* on me!(p.1071)

Clarissa's remarks, and her prayer, demonstrate the conflict between the passions of anger and resentment she recognises in herself, and the co-existence in her of reason and the charity which forgives. Belford's comment, at this point 'She

had not her Bible before her for nothing', reminds the reader that such forgiveness is founded on the law of God. Clarissa herself is aware of the inexorability of that law; if she wishes to aspire to the Beatific Vision, she must forgive Lovelace, whatever her natural feelings, and whatever the difficulty.

> I am trying to bring my mind into such a frame as to be able to *pity* him (poor perjured wretch! What has he not to answer for!); and that I shall not think myself qualified for the state I am aspiring to, if, after a few struggles more, I cannot *forgive* him too.(pp.1101-1102)

Forgiveness cannot be merely an emotional response, since it could not then be a settled state, given the instability of human feelings, but must find its origin in reason, and in an act of the will. When Clarissa speaks a little later of 'endeavouring to bring my mind to forgive all the world',(p.1106) it is her mind, not her emotions, which she acknowledges as the agent of forgiveness. Likewise, in rejecting Lovelace's offer of marriage, a belated attempt to rectify, in worldly terms, the evil he has done her, Clarissa bases both her rejection and her forgiveness on principle, rather than on emotion. She declares as much to Anna, asking her to communicate her decision to the ladies of Lovelace's family:

> Be pleased to acquaint them that I deceive myself, if my resolution on this head (however ungratefully, and even inhumanly, he has treated me) be not owing more to *principle* than *passion*. Nor can I give a stronger proof of the truth of this assurance, than by declaring that I *can* and *will* forgive him on this one easy condition, *that he will never molest me more*.(p.1141)

The important words here 'can and will' acknowledge that forgiveness lies within the scope of reasoned moral choice. The difficulty of making that choice and of offering forgiveness freely is demonstrated by Clarissa's imposition of a condition, natural enough in the circumstances. However, such conditional forgiveness is not yet the perfection of charity. Clarissa's spiritual strength increases as her bodily strength declines, and her growing resolution towards offering an unconditional

forgiveness, as the moment of dissolution approaches, and her desire to reach that position in which she can claim to be 'in perfect charity with all the world', is an index of that strength. In reply to Lovelace's letter asking for forgiveness, she tells him that she has been able to go further than forgiveness, and to wish him well.(p.1191)

Clarissa's concern is for Lovelace's spiritual welfare. Hearing that he is ill, she prays that he may meet with God's mercy, although he has himself shown none. A little later, she expresses the wish that he may feel remorse for his own sake, adding that suffering has taught her to wish for mercy for others, since she knows what it is to experience the lack of it. She leaves it to God to ascertain the true state of Lovelace's repentance. However, it is impossible for the reader to ascertain whether Richardson means Lovelace to be reminded, in Clarissa's mention of her suffering, of what she has endured, or whether the author cannot forbear, because of the integrity of his presentation, showing Clarissa herself unable, despite her struggles and her claims of perfect charity, to subdue her resentment completely. Likewise, it is difficult to decide whether Clarissa's triumph in her forgiveness of Lovelace is that of self-conquest, or that of gratified pride:

> The man whom once I could have loved, I have been enabled to despise: and shall not *charity* complete my triumph? And shall I not *enjoy* it? – And where would be my triumph if he *deserved* my forgiveness? – Poor man! he has had a loss in losing me! I have the pride to think so, because I think I know my own heart. I have had none in losing him!(p.1254)

Although Clarissa can honestly acknowledge her own pride, she may be somewhat mistaken in claiming to know her own heart; it is not clear whether, despite her claim, she does not feel a loss. She might be expected, had she entirely conquered both secular love and natural resentment, to be speaking of a love based on 'reason and piety', rather than of despising Lovelace. Perfect charity is hard to achieve; it may be almost impossible for human frailty to be able to condemn the sin

without also condemning the sinner. Richardson certainly seems to have intended that Clarissa should achieve the state of perfect forgiveness, since he writes in a letter to Frances Grainger:

> People will find it very difficult to forgive wilful or Premeditated Injuries, where they love not, since where they do not love they will not be very far from the other extreme or from despising at least. She owns very near her Death that she could have loved her Destroyer Lovelace. Hence we have no doubt that she dying could forgive him and pray for him.(31)

Elsewhere, he asserts baldly, 'And yet forgiveness, even of injuries, is a *Christian duty*'.(32) However, Clarissa declares that she *does* despise Lovelace, and the reader may suspect that this response arises not only from the nature of the act perpetrated upon her, but also from the painful check given to the love she now disclaims because of that very act. In any case, it would appear that whatever Clarissa's claims, and those of Richardson for her, her triumph may not yet be as complete as she would wish.

The ambivalences in Clarissa's heart, and the ambiguities in her expression of them, do not seem to be quite resolved by the approach of death. Her last letter to Lovelace may be seen as the final state of forgiveness which she achieves. She believes, and according to the doctrines enshrined in the words of the Gospel and in the profound simplicities of the Lord's Prayer, she is right to believe, that her own ultimate destination depends on whether or not she can rise above the grief and resentment that Lovelace's conduct has created in her. Forgiveness, therefore, is a pre-condition for salvation. Clarissa declares that Lovelace's crimes against her have indirectly preserved her from a life of suffering as the wife of such a man, and have done her the further service of bringing her to an earlier accession to glory than she might otherwise have expected.

There is no reason to doubt that Clarissa is presented as having a conscious intention to forgive, or to suspect that her declaration of a disinterested desire for Lovelace's eternal welfare is to be taken as other than sincere; Christian doctrine would endorse her declaration that she could not regard herself as truly penitent if she could not return good for evil, and if she could not forgive as she wishes to be forgiven. However, her forgiveness carries a certain sting in reminding Lovelace of what he has deprived her of in this life while indirectly assisting her to her early accession to glory. In pursuing his designs against her, Lovelace may be seen as an instance of Divine Providence bringing forth good – Clarissa's sanctification – from the evil intentions of a sinner, but he is also a man who can and does experience the pain of this well-merited rebuke; Clarissa's letter would have no effect were he possessed entirely of the 'hardened insensibility' of which she accuses him. Moreover, when he refers to the 'barbed dart of after-reflection'(p.1429) which sticks in his heart, it is legitimate for the reader to assume that Clarissa's letter has had its effect in exacerbating the pain of guilt and remorse, and was intended to do so. It is also open to the reader to assume that since saints, too, share a nature which has been damaged by the fall, and in which passions cannot always be perfectly subdued to reason as in the pre-lapsarian state, Clarissa's legitimate concern, her duty even, to warn a sinner of the consequences, for himself and others, of his sin, may be undercut by a desire, not recognized by herself, to make that sinner suffer. Duty and desire here share a common boundary, and it is impossible to define exactly where it lies.

Clarissa's expressed concern lest Lovelace put himself beyond the power of Divine mercy to forgive, would be regarded as a legitimate concern of Christian charity. Lovelace's response to her final letter shows him as a man who is unable to face his guilt and remorse, because of the pain of his reflections. 'But no more of

these fruitless reflections', he tells Belford. However, to endure such reflections is the beginning of penitence, and penitence, sustained and sincere, would save him. St. Augustine points out that he who refuses to believe that forgiveness is possible, and continues in this state until the day of his death, 'is guilty of that unforgivable sin against the Holy Spirit in whom Christ grants forgiveness of sins'.(33) As a Protestant, Lovelace would not have sought forgiveness through the Church, as St. Augustine requires the sinner to do, but he does not seek forgiveness at all, because of a combination of pride and despair. Clarissa's concern, then, for this sinner is appropriate; he stands in danger, as she tells him, of the loss of his soul.

Such a rebuke as she gives him, whatever ambiguities it holds, may be seen as an instance of charity well regarded by Christian tradition. St. Augustine regards such rebukes as evidence of compassion in one who has reason to forgive a sinner:

> He who corrects with the rod, or constrains by any sort of discipline, him over whom he has authority, while yet forgiving him from the heart the sin by which he has been injured or offended, or who prays for him to be forgiven, is giving alms not only by the fact of forgiving and praying but also by the act of rebuking or of inflicting on him some corrective penalty; the reason being that he is showing compassion.(34)

Clarissa in dying has an authority over Lovelace which her victory in the battle of wills has given her. Moreover, Christian commentators have pointed out the necessity that confronts the dying, in particular, to absolve others. Jeremy Taylor's discussion of forgiveness suggests that God makes use of us to offer mercy to ourselves and to others.

> Charity is the great chanel through which God passes all his mercy upon mankinde. For we receive absolution of our sins in proportion to our forgiving our brother: this is the rule of our hopes, and the measure of our desire in this world.(35)

Clarissa looks forward to death with confidence because of her conviction that God has forgiven her fault. She could not, then, feel such conviction, if Taylor's

comment has any validity, had she not in her turn learned to forgive, and such forgiveness is completed by a concern for the welfare of the sinner who injured her. In this way her rebuke can be seen as part of her forgiveness. Her final letter to Lovelace does not palliate the sins he has committed. From one point of view, the reader may perceive the dwelling on his iniquities as evidence that her forgiveness is not complete, and that she still feels an unacknowledged resentment. However, another construction could be placed on these reminders of his sinfulness, and her reproaches from this point of view can be seen as evidence of the performance of Christian duty rather than of a species of self-indulgence. Moreover, this is a duty which Clarissa has undertaken before, and reciprocally, with Anna. Clarissa in pointing out her friend's faults, expects Anna to offer an equal charitable correction of her own. This, she tells her friend, is the basis of their friendship:

> Few friendships are founded on such a basis as ours – which is, 'freely to give reproof and thankfully to *receive* it, as occasions arise; so that either may have opportunity to clear up mistakes, to acknowledge and amend errors, as well in behaviour as in words and deeds; and to rectify and confirm each other in the judgement each shall form upon persons, things, and circumstances'.(p.484)

Seen in the light of this severe but essential element in the relationship between Clarissa and Anna, Clarissa's rebukes to Lovelace take on the aspect of a form of charity, sanctioned by one strain of Christian thinking at least, in a tradition inherited from St. Augustine's view of the matter by scholastic theology:

> There are two ways of correcting wrongdoing: brotherly correction treats it as bad for the wrongdoer, and is an act of charity towards him as a brother aimed at his recovery; another kind of correction treats the wrong as harmful to others and to the general good, and is an act of justice, maintaining law and order between people.(36)

Since one of Clarissa's prayers for Lovelace is that he may be prevented from ruining others as he has ruined her, and since her final letter does not spare to point

out the iniquity of his conduct, coupled with fervent prayers for his reformation and ultimate salvation, she may be seen to act towards Lovelace (by virtue of the 'brotherly correction' that she offers), and towards society (by virtue of her concern for the harm done to it in the past, and probably to be done in the future) with exemplary charity. The fact that such charity, in an imperfect world, has its ambiguities, does not make the conscious intentions of the well-wisher any less valid, nor the hoped-for effects any less to be desired.

5

Holy Living III : Justice

Justice, both legal and natural, has long been considered a legitimate province of philosophy. Plato regards it as one of the four cardinal virtues of the ideal state[1] and the individual as just when spirit and appetite are properly subordinated to reason. Aristotle discusses the justice which governs relationships between man and man, and the individual and the state, including in the former category the justice which should inhere in the father of a family and the master of slaves.[2] In Richardson's own time, Hume locates the origins of this virtue in social utility, and, in the person of Epicurus, concludes that a negative response to the enquiry as to whether there are 'any marks of a distributive justice in the world' must imply that there is 'no reason to ascribe justice, in our sense of it, to the gods'.[3]

For the Christian believer, however, of whatever tradition, the concerns of justice are inseparable from the righteousness of God, and cannot be separated in Christian practice from the love of God and charity towards man. No-one who claims to fulfil the injunction to love his neighbour will treat him unjustly; no-one who claims to love and serve God will do so. Both pre- and post-Reformation theology acknowledge this essential relationship between charity and justice. Aquinas firmly links the two virtues as an indispensable expression of the relationship which should exist between God and man, and between man and his fellows:

> So there are virtues disposing the will towards love of God and fellowman: charity, justice and the like.[4]

He stresses that justice should govern the relationships between man and man, and is to be exercised both in the private and in the public domain. In the one case, the Christian is required to recognise the rights, moral, social and material, of his individual fellow-man; in the other, he is to recognise the respective rights and duties of the governed, and of those who govern them. In both cases, however, justice is grounded in God's universal design for order in human affairs, not merely in human legal sanctions, although Aquinas acknowledges the necessity of these:

> But strictly speaking true justice is a virtue instilled in us by God's grace, and cannot be caused by moral injunctions which govern human actions; though the injunctions of human law can generate in us an acquired virtue of justice.(5)

Like Aquinas, Calvin locates the origin of justice in the Divine lawgiver, and likewise, links charity and justice together in the service of God and a right relationship to man. Writing of the manner in which God divided His Law, which contains a complete rule of righteousness, into two parts, he concludes that the first place is assigned to the worship of God, and the second to the duties of charity to man, and adds:

> The first foundation of righteousness undoubtedly is the worship of God ... Without the fear of God men do not even observe justice and charity among themselves.(6)

As Aquinas does, Calvin makes a distinction between legal and natural justice, and recognizes that these may be opposed. In the social sphere, those who have the right to govern a household may fail to act justly if they do not faithfully fulfil their duties towards their children and servants. He concludes that everyone, of whatever status, must consider what he owes to his neighbour, and must have reference to God and to His law, remembering that:

> The law requiring us to promote and defend the interest and convenience of our fellow-men, applies equally to our minds and our hands.(7)

It is clear that there is a strong and unbroken tradition in Christian thought which regards the concerns of justice as primarily related to the eternal law of God, whether justice is exerted in the natural or the legal sense. God's will, according to this tradition, as Calvin points out, is the supreme rule of righteousness.(8) However, Calvin equally contends that in man, damaged as he is by his fall, the ability to live by that law is subject to failure. Men may condemn evils in general, but deceive themselves in particular instances.(9)

These well-established contentions concerning the nature and exercise of justice are reflected in Richardson's novels. The issues which he explores in his work are concerned perhaps more with the claims of natural than of legal justice, but in his examination of the rights and duties of parents and children, husbands and wives, masters and servants, those claims must inevitably be examined with those of legally instituted authority in mind. Of all Richardson's characters only Sir Charles, that example of achieved virtue, faultlessly discerns an exact adjustment between the rights and obligations of the parties who apply to his superior capacity for judgement, or on whom he gratuitously bestows it. The issues of justice in Clarissa are less clear-cut, and Richardson's treatment of their subtleties and of the delicate adjustment between justice and charity reflects the greater complexity of this novel. There is no-one who possesses the right of superior judgement in Clarissa to arbitrate between Richardson's heroine and her parents, or to whom she, as the prospective bride of first Mr. Solmes, and then of Lovelace might apply to be informed definitively of the respective rights and duties of spouses. As a daughter, Clarissa must acknowledge the rights of her parents, especially of her father, to dispose of her, but she is also required to determine the point at which Mr. Harlowe violates the claims of natural justice and the laws of God. As a prospective wife, her difficulty is

that the injustice of her proposed – successive – husbands, will make the fulfilment of her own duties to God and man a near impossibility.

Both natural and legal justice, in a complex and delicate balance, are required to govern the relationships which form the bonds holding human society together. If only legal justice is exerted to regulate the respective rights and duties of parents and children, husbands and wives, governors and governed, there may often be a dissatisfied sense that these relationships are not adjusted in such a way that, according to the theologian, 'involves doing the specific good owed to one's fellowmen and avoiding specific evils harmful to them'.(10) Nowhere does there appear to be such imbalance between a legally sanctioned order and the reader's sense of natural justice as in some of the parent-child relationships in Richardson's novels. In Clarissa the question of justice in such familial relationships is examined in great depth by the development of a situation in which a most dutiful daughter finds herself in opposition to her parents' wishes. The rights of parents, especially those of fathers, over their children are sanctioned and hallowed by Scripture, and universally acknowledged by Christian commentators. St. Paul places disobedience to parents among serious sins (Rom. 1.30), and Calvin regards those who fail in the duty of submission to parents as subject to a curse, even if that curse is long-delayed in its fulfilment.(11)

Richardson himself appears to have had no doubt that parents have a right to the obedience of their children, or that such a right takes its origin and force from the authority of Scripture. In a letter to Sarah Chapone, he writes:

> The Law of God, is very express in many Places in favour of Parental Authority, even sometimes to the Power over Life, in case of Refractoriness of Children.(12)

This is not to say, however, that Richardson does not recognise that parents may sometimes fail to exercise their power wisely, or that they may fail to wield it in accordance with a concern for natural justice which should moderate their exercise of legal and institutionalized rights. If Calvin promises that a curse will descend on children who fail in their duty to their parents, Richardson believes that an equally severe punishment is reserved for parents who fail in their duties towards their children. In another letter to Sarah Chapone he makes exactly this point:

> One great Design of this Piece, was to inforce the Duty of Children to Parents, whether Parents did theirs or not; and to hold out a Warning to Parents in the Punishment worse than that of Death, of the Harlowe-Parents for their Defects in theirs.(13)

In his recognition that there are reciprocal duties in the parent-child relationship, Richardson is in accord with the notions widely disseminated in his time by the religious conduct books. Bishop William Fleetwood starts his consideration of the subject by defining the duties of children to parents as love, respect, obedience, and succour or support. However, he acknowledges that it is not within the power of a child – of any person – to love and hate as he wills, and enjoins both parents and children to take such measures as are necessary to bring about the probability of a natural affection:

> Upon this account, it will depend much upon the parents' management, whether the children shall love with that affection of the heart, which both the parents and themselves desire they should: Therefore, by being commanded to *love* our parents, we are especially commanded to take and keep such courses, as will most probably secure and increase our natural affection to our parents, and to avoid and decline all things that may in any way diminish it.(14)

The modern reader of Clarissa may conclude that the Harlowes' management of their youngest child, despite Clarissa's own insistence on the indulgence with which they have hitherto treated her, might be unlikely to

encourage such natural affection. However, Richardson establishes Clarissa's reverence for her parents from the very beginning of the novel when she declares to Anna that a child should not 'seek to clear her own character, or to justify her actions, at the expense of the most revered ones'.(p.52) Moreover, there appears to be some justification for Clarissa's references to parental indulgence. It is clear that she has been so generally a favourite as to make James and Arabella jealous, and the Harlowes have by no means been harsh to their daughter at this point, since she has already been permitted, when the novel opens, to refuse a number of suitors. It appears that the power of refusal has been left to her choice. Since Clarissa's objection to one such suitor, Mr. Wyerley, is based on her distaste for the disrespect with which he refers to sacred matters, in accepting her rejection in this instance the Harlowes appear to be not only indulgent, but wise parents, since Fleetwood argues that it is important to secure a certain compatibility between prospective spouses. He advises parents to be very careful that:

> They urge not their Authority too far in constraining their Children to marry, not only where there is no visible Aversion, but where there is great Likelihood that there will not be good Agreement.(15)

A young woman of sincere, if – at this point – conventional piety would be unlikely to find it agreeable to be married to a blasphemer. However, the Harlowes' subsequent treatment of their daughter, in which the exercise of their institutionalized authority can only be seen by the reader to be in opposition to the claims of natural justice, is inconsistent with this earlier apparent concern that their child should not be united to any man who might offend her religious or personal susceptibilities.

This inconsistency is apparently initiated by a virtual abdication of their parental authority in favour of their son, James. Since it is James whose greed and ambition give impetus to the proposal to marry Clarissa to a suitor whom she finds so

repulsive in every respect, and who is indeed a man of sordid character, such abdication can in itself be seen as an act of injustice on the part of her parents. Christopher Hill, following Professor Habakkuk, has pointed out that social conditions in the early eighteenth century and the ambitions of such families as the Harlowes could place the eldest son, in whom the hopes of family aggrandizement resided, in a unique position of authority.(16) It is clear that James does hope, by the accumulation of the family wealth in his own hands, to be both the instrument and the beneficiary of the Harlowes' elevation, and that both Clarissa's legacy from her grandfather and her opposition to the proposed marriage with Mr. Solmes are stumbling-blocks in his progress towards the achievement of his ambitions.

However, to explain the situation is not to excuse the Harlowe parents in the abdication of their duty. If Clarissa is subject to them in obedience, she is also entitled to their protection against envy and spite, protection, which in the third edition, she explicitly claims,(i, p.226) and whatever James's other motives for the course he takes in proposing Solmes as a suitor, both envy and spite are mingled with them in his case, as in that of Arabella, who supports him. If the Harlowe parents are culpable in elevating considerations of material success over those of ensuring that their daughter is settled in marriage with a man whose character she can respect, they compound that culpability by failing to protect her from falling victim to the least admirable qualities of her brother and sister. Clarissa is herself aware of this reversal of the established and natural order in the Harlowe household. She writes to Anna of her brother, to whom her elders, 'whose will ought to be his', now defer:

> Well may he expect to be treated with this deference by every other person, when my papa himself, generally so absolute, constantly pays it to him.(p.54)

Clarissa acknowledges that there is no established age at which a 'good child shall conclude herself absolved from the duty she owes to a parent', but equally, there is no age laid down at which parents may lay aside the care they have for children.(17) The reader may infer that in the case of the Harlowe family, this ideal of reciprocity has broken down.

Richardson might have expected his original readers to be aware of this breakdown in reciprocal relations, since the conduct literature of the time discusses such situations, and they might be expected to be topics of widespread interest. Patrick Delany declared that as long as children continued as part of their parents' family 'they are absolutely in their parents' power, and have no more right to dispose of themselves than they have to dispose of the parents' fortune, or inheritance, or any of their goods'. However, he balances this firm assertion of parental rights by cautioning parents that they should not offer violence to children's inclinations by forcing them to marry against their will.(18) Fleetwood is not quite so absolute in the assertion of parental rights over the disposal of children. He points out that in respect of marriage, children are not tied to 'such strict obedience' as were those of the Jews and Greeks and Romans, societies in which parents had absolute power to dispose of their children, but acknowledges that parents have a great power, which they must use tenderly and kindly.(19) Children may only resist such authority with reluctance, and only in specific circumstances:

> It must be in Cases of great and lasting Moment and Concern, and such, as, when represented to fair, and equal, wise and understanding People, they may find themselves both pitied for their Trial, and approv'd for their Resolution.(20)

Neither Clarissa, nor anyone else in the novel, disputes the right of parents to exact obedience from their children, although Anna, even while acknowledging the sacredness of parental authority, questions whether that authority should not be based

upon reason.(p.85) Clarissa herself, writing to Solmes a letter which urges him to abandon his pretensions to her hand on the grounds that in doing so, he will not only show generosity to her, but will also do justice to himself, acknowledges her parents' right to her obedience, but qualifies the exercise of such a right by recourse to reason, when she refers to her parents as being those 'who had a right to all reasonable obedience from me'.(p.159)

To exercise their prerogatives justly, the Harlowes must exercise them reasonably. Richardson appears to have recognised that the Harlowes' treatment of their daughter is not based upon that reason which gives due regard to justice. The Christian reader might infer that whatever is neither just nor reasonable cannot be in accordance with God's law; the Christian author seems somewhat uncomfortable in balancing the claims of natural justice due to his heroine, and the institutionalized rights of her parents. Writing in the persona of the Editor of the collection of letters which makes up the history of this young lady, he refers in the Preface to his aims in publishing the collection, among these being:

> To caution parents against the undue exertion of their natural authority over their children in the great article of marriage.(p.36)

Writing to Susanna Highmore, he asserts the necessity for children to be dutiful towards their parents, but balances that assertion with a recognition that parental behaviour may indeed be unreasonable, and uses the Harlowes as an example of such lack of reason:

> Is the girl to be the judge; and is she to dispense with the word and the thing called *duty*, should her parents be less indulgent (if not quite unreasonable; if not absolute Harlowes) than she would have them to be?(21)

He adds that he has made the Harlowes cruel and implacable to inculcate the doctrine that lack of duty on the one side does not dispense with the performance of

duty on the other; such performance earns even greater merit if it is not reciprocated. The reader of Richardson's comments on his own fictional creations may perhaps regard him as being somewhat ambivalent in his opinions on their conduct. He seems to regard the Harlowes as unreasonable and as failing in their parental duty, but notwithstanding to expect that a child in such circumstances should obey those parents and earn merit by the sacrifice of personal inclinations. Yet his recognition of the essentially unreasonable nature of the Harlowes' exercise of their parental prerogatives carries the implication that a child need not comply with what is unreasonable. The modern reader must inevitably be less aware of the resonances of such statements, and less likely to perceive Richardson's remarks as comments on the changing state of parent-child relationships which was characteristic of his time and which was a matter of debate. It is necessary to remember that cases of parental coercion in matters of marriage were by no means unknown, whether coercion took the form of over-persuasion or of actual physical restraint to prevent a match considered unsuitable, even if the attitudes of the time were undergoing a change.(22)

Clarissa's situation falls uncomfortably between the claims of natural and of legal justice, between unquestioning obedience to an authority doubtfully delegated to a brother, and the dictates of reason. She herself acknowledges in a letter to her brother that her father may, if he wishes, turn her 'out of his doors' and may do so through the agency of James.(p.226) However, in the same letter, she refers twice to the justice of her cause, and might claim with some validity that she is basing her resistance to the proposed marriage with Solmes on the dictates of reason, since she later writes to Anna, 'God forbid that I should ever think myself freed from my father's *reasonable* control'.(p.327)

The word 'reasonable' in this context, where she is referring specifically to the financial independence which the assumption of her grandfather's legacy would give her, cannot but reflect on the unreasonable nature of her father's demands on her, that she should marry a man who has nothing to recommend him but money, and whose character is repulsive to her. The question must be asked whether any reasonable parent could justly expect a child to embrace such a match without repugnance, and if such repugnance were felt, to embrace it at all. It would be no test of his heroine's duty and of her parents' just exercise of their prerogatives were Clarissa threatened with an attractive suitor, and certainly no effective comment on a current debate. Richardson takes an extreme case in offering to the reader's consideration an exceptionally dutiful child, an unusually repulsive suitor, and parents whose motives in a worldly sense might be seen as rational, balanced against an unreasonable use of power.

Justice involves an adjustment between the rights of individuals, and Christian theology claims a place for it as a virtue, because, according to Aquinas:

> It regulates human action according to a standard of right reason, and so renders it good.(23)

Richardson appears to have wished the reader to understand that in the situation he proposes for his heroine, the delicate adjustment between the rights of individuals is not concluded. While he supports the validity of parental rights in general, he makes a case that there may be exceptional circumstances in which a child's compliance cannot be reasonably expected. In a letter to Sarah Chapone he discusses this difficult issue:

> I repeat, that I have not anywhere contended, that Parents have a Right to command Children to marry against the *whole Stream* of their Affections, when *they run rapidly* into another *Channel*, or against the Conviction of their Judgements – If I had, I should not

> have made Clarissa persevere as she does; tho' she has not such *rapid Inclinations*; nor punished the Harlowes as I have done![24]

That Richardson had deeply considered the matter before placing Clarissa in so painful a situation, virtually impossible to be satisfactorily resolved, poised as she is between a demand that cannot be just because it is not reasonable, and her own conviction, a conviction sanctioned by religion and institutionalized by society, that children owe obedience to their parents, is demonstrated by his quoting in support of the remarks in this letter, the judgement of Bishop Fleetwood on such cases:

> If the parents offer what the Child cannot possibly consent to, and what the Neighbourhood and wise and unconcerned Persons blame, condemn and reject, upon a competent and reasonable Information of the whole Proceedings, if such Refusal of the Offer be made with Decency and great Humility, upon the Children's Part, it will not fall under the Head of sinful Disobedience. They may stand off with Innocence and Safety; and yet may *honour* as they ought *their Father and their Mother* ... [25]

Bishop Fleetwood's remarks could be seen to have a direct application to Clarissa's situation. By quoting them, it appears that Richardson believes that they do. Clarissa's rejection of Solmes is based not only on physical revulsion, but essentially on the same conviction which leads her to reject Lovelace. Her letter to the former points out that she 'cannot consent to marry a man whom I cannot value'.[p.159] In different circumstances, she might have made the same remark to Lovelace. In both cases, such comments would confirm that she regards herself unable to do what is required of her, what she 'cannot possibly consent to', by uniting herself to men whose characters she cannot respect. Indeed, in the additions to the third edition, many of which are designed to offer a more explicit exoneration of Clarissa's conduct, Richardson at once stresses that her prudence would have prevented her from uniting herself to a man 'too immoral to be implicitly beloved', and throws heavier blame for her fate on to the Harlowes themselves.[iv, pp.532-533] If

the Bishop's statement be considered further, generations of readers, wise or not, might be considered to constitute a group of 'unconcerned persons' to whom Richardson has given 'competent and reasonable information' on which to base a judgement which will lead them to 'blame, condemn and reject' both the offer made by Solmes and the Harlowes' insistence on its acceptability. It appears that Richardson intended that his original readers should do so.

He is at pains in a later letter to Sarah Chapone to stress his opposition to forced marriage, and claims that Clarissa's letters to Solmes, as well as those she writes to her parents, uncles, brother and sister on the same subject, were intended as a 'powerful plea' against it. However, Richardson is aware that girls in Clarissa's situation may be driven into marriages repugnant to them, and that few actually refuse to take the vow when they are led to the altar. In the same letter he considers the duty of Clarissa had she yielded to her parents' pressure and married Solmes:

> But had she been prevailed upon to go to the Altar with Solmes, there can be no doubt, but that she would have made him an excellent Wife. She would have endeavoured to love him; and if she could not, it would have been a very hard Sentence, to pronounce upon her, that she had incurred the guilt of Perjury, before God, for having been prevailed upon to give up her own Will to that of her Parents. Solmes was sure of her Principles. He and her barbarous Friends declare that. And he was willing to be satisfied with her Fear, altho' he should not have her Love.(26)

Most Christian commentators might not regard, even if Solmes does, fear as a basis for marriage. William Fleetwood points out that the marriage relationship is 'a State and Condition, upon which the Happiness or Misery of Life does very much depend', and that 'without *Love*, the very best of all good Qualities will never make a constant Conversation easy and delightful'.(27) He does not discuss what marriage might be like if characterized by fear, but he does consider the situation which may arise if parents' commands run counter to the Law of God.

It is certain that all commands of God must be obeyed before those of Parents; if ever they interfere, our duty to God is most undoubtedly to be preferr'd. The Counsels or Commands of Parents must never sway so far with Children, as to cause them to do what God forbids, or to neglect what God commands; because the Authority of God is first and greatest; nothing is to stand in Competition with it; but then the Command of God must be plain and evident; it must not be a doubtful or disputed Thing; but full as certain, as that Obedience is due to the Commands of Parents.(28)

How far the Harlowes' demand that their daughter should consent to a marriage with a man whom she fears and detests in equal measure has the sanction of legitimate authority is open to question. Clarissa bases her objection to marriage with Solmes on the contention that to make her vows to him would be a form of perjury; fear might constrain her to obey such a man in all that was not sin, but she could neither love nor honour him. She expresses her reverence for the state of marriage; it is an 'altar-vowed duty',(p.241) and one concern which she claims to feel in her attempts to avoid marriage with Solmes is the likelihood of rising each day to some new breach of that duty. The cruelty of the position to which Clarissa is exposed lies partly in the conflict of duties which it presents to her.

The dilemma is resolved for Clarissa since her primary duty is to God, and there is no reason to doubt her sincerity in asserting that to obey her parents in this instance would expose her to the likelihood of violating a vow made before Him. The sincerity of her contention is in no way diminished by her suitor's general repulsiveness, but perhaps some original readers of the novel might not have been so entirely sure as is its heroine that the command of God is as 'plain and evident' as Fleetwood claims it should be in cases of disobedience, while for most modern readers Clarissa's repugnance may be seen as sufficient justification in itself for rejection of Solmes. Richardson's treatment of Clarissa's situation has been seen by some modern commentators as a severe critique of the patriarchal system, but to a

certain extent, he endorses that system on religious grounds, condemning abuses of it rather than the system itself. He is careful to make his heroine acknowledge that this imperative has a Divine origin; she tells Anna that failure to observe it, will result in God's punishments.(p.434) A letter to Frances Grainger suggests that Richardson regards obedience to parents as a religious imperative, rather than as a convention merely human in origin, and as such an indispensable duty:

> Be pleased, Madam, always to remember this Great Rule, inculcated thro'out the History of Clarissa, That in all reciprocal Duties the Non-Performance of the Duty on one Part is not an excuse for the Failure of the other. Why, think you, are future Rewards promised and future Punishments threatened? But the one to induce us to Persevere in our Duties here, and the other to Punish our Deviation from them. She was not bid to *obey* even unjust Powers *not only for Wrath* but *for Conscience Sake*.(29)

The Harlowes demonstrably fail to behave with both justice and charity towards all their children, since James is allowed to compromise his soul by unchecked violence and materialism, and Arabella's eventual disastrous marriage is proof of the family's continuing elevation of worldly over spiritual values. The conduct books did not fail to warn against such failures.(30) The Harlowe parents' failure in relation to their children might well be expressed in the words of the Aquinas:

> Justice for individuals involves doing the specific good owed to one's fellowmen and avoiding specific evils harmful to them ... In this sense avoiding evil and doing good are component parts of justice, required for its wholeness in action.(31)

By the light of this contention, the Harlowe household is characterized by its injustice. The specific good owed to those who are entrusted to their care and subject to their authority is what the Harlowes have failed to provide, while they have equally failed to avoid the specific evils harmful to this special category of their

fellowmen, their own children. Ironically it is the one point in which they may be seen to have succeeded which makes the conflict between themselves and their daughter impossible of resolution. The virtuous education for which the dying Clarissa will give thanks to her father is that which has taught her that the law of God must be given primacy over the unjust commands of legitimate authority, and it is on this contention that she bases her rejection of Solmes. Her last letter to her father addresses him as 'dear, venerable Sir', and acknowledges to the last a duty which the reader may feel has in only one respect been unequivocally reciprocated, that of the provision of a virtuous education. This is a benefit which Richardson regarded as an essential foundation to moral excellence, as the Postscript to the third edition makes clear.(iv, p.564) Moreover, it held out the hope of a happy death.(32) Conversely, as the extended histories of Polly and Sally in the Conclusion to the third edition demonstrate, the effects of a poor education in morality might very well lead to spiritual ruin.(iv, pp.542-544) Clarissa writes:

> And now let me bless you, my honoured papa, and bless you as I write, upon my knees, for all the benefits I have received from your indulgence.(p.1371)

In this respect, Clarissa may be seen to be following the prescriptions of the Gospel, in returning good for evil, a blessing for a curse, but she is also following the prescriptions of the conduct books. The behaviour that Jeremy Taylor recommends should be exercised towards a faulty ruler or parent might have been written as a gloss upon the above response to the failure of this specific parent:

> *Speak not evil of the Ruler of thy people*, neither *curse thy Father and Mother*, nor revile thy spiritual Guides, nor discover and lay naked their infirmities: but treat them with reverence and religion, and preserve their Authority sacred by esteeming their persons venerable!(33)

It is the author of Clarissa, rather than its heroine, who discovers and lays naked the infirmities of the Harlowes, because the integrity of his treatment demands it, in despite of his respect for an established order generally upheld both by his society and by his religious beliefs. However, those religious beliefs uphold the principle of authority, but not its violation or distortion.

Writing of the parental prerogative in the provision of spouses for their children, Jeremy Taylor reminds parents that they should have regard to their children's affections, a point also made by other commentators. He at once suggests, in the most striking language, the importance of this aspect of marriage and the pain of its absence. Concerning this parental prerogative, he points out that it is also a parental duty to use it wisely in the matter of their choice of spouse:

> In which they must secure piety and Religion, and the affection and love of the interested persons; and after these, let them make what provisions they can for other conveniences or advantages: ever remembering that they can do no injury more afflictive to the children than to joyn them with cords of a disagreeing affection: it is like tying a Wolf and a Lamb, or planting the Vine in a Garden of Coleworts. Let them be persuaded with reasonable inducements to make them willing and to choose according to the parents' wish, but at no hand let them be forced. Better to sit up all night, than to go to bed with a Dragon.(34)

The Harlowes have not regarded 'conveniences and advantages' as secondary considerations, but as their primary concern. They show little interest in securing for their daughter a spouse characterized by 'piety and religion'; the continence which they claim for Solmes as a recommendation opposed to Lovelace's promiscuity, is less evidence of a positive virtue on his part than of the fact that his cold passion is avarice. On the other hand, the ill-concealed resentment with which he responds to

Clarissa's rejection suggests a man who will indeed be a wolf ready to devour this sacrificial lamb once marriage has placed her in his hands.

Clarissa herself has good reason to be apprehensive of her position in marriage to Solmes, or to any man whose conduct may not be regulated either by Christian charity or by natural kindness. She fears the power which a husband may, sanctioned both by society and by religion, exercise over his wife. Her comments on the subject, expressed in a letter to her uncle, John Harlowe, deserve to be quoted at length, since they convey so fully and so clearly the restricted life of a married woman if her husband is less than even moderately considerate, and the sense of a lost identity which must in any case characterize a state in which a woman is by law an 'absolute and dependent property':

> Marriage is a very solemn engagement, enough to make a young creature's heart ache, with the *best* prospects, when she thinks seriously of it! – To be given up to a strange man; to be engrafted into a strange family; to give up her very name, as the mark of becoming his absolute and dependent property: to be obliged to prefer this strange man to father, mother – to everybody: and his humours to all her own – or to contend, perhaps, in breach of a vowed duty for every innocent instance of free will: to go no-whither: to make acquaintance: to give up acquaintance - to renounce even the strictest friendships perhaps; all at his pleasure, whether she think it reasonable to do so or not. Surely, sir, a young creature ought not to be obliged to make all these sacrifices but for such a man as she can approve. If she *is*, how sad must be the case! – how miserable the life, if to be called *life*![(pp.148-149)]

Such reflections must remind the reader, even if they strike no resonances with John Harlowe, that Clarissa has had before her the daily example of just such a union in which the wife has done her utmost to accommodate herself to the government of an autocratic husband for the sake of peace, if not in pursuit of a religious duty. Such compliance has not made Mrs. Harlowe a contented and happy woman, nor rendered the Harlowe family harmonious, as might have been the case had the master of the household been possessed of a kindlier and less exacting

temper. In the third edition, Clarissa offers some remarks to this effect herself,(i, p.74) although her filial piety later constrains her to attempt to excuse both her mother's passivity and her father's autocracy.(i, pp.132-133) Since so much must depend upon the character of the husband, it is not surprising that Clarissa, as a prospective wife, has so far begged to be excused from the addresses of suitors far less repulsive than Solmes.

However, Clarissa appears to accept that marriage must be her fate, or if entering into the married state is seen in terms of undertaking a duty, her vocation. She may often express a willingness to embrace the single life, but the reader may reasonably feel at this point that such remarks are not unnatural, given the difficulty of her situation. Pre-Reformation theology had generally elevated the state of consecrated virginity above that of marriage. Although one contemporary commentator of Richardson's, William Law, advocates virginity, along with voluntary poverty, both practised in retirement, as superior to life in the world,(35) the Protestant religious ethos generally regarded marriage as the state ordained by God in which the majority of His people should fulfil His will. Calvin argues that man was not made for a life of solitude, and that God has made provision for him in the institution of marriage. Celibacy is not to be despised, but it is not in every man's power to live as a celibate, although God may bestow a special grace; to attempt to live a life of celibacy without that special call, is to oppose God Himself, and 'nature as constituted by Him'. Calvin concludes that marriage is the only mode of life in which most people may live chastely:

> Let no man rashly despise matrimony as a thing useless or superfluous to him; let no man long for celibacy unless he is able to dispense with the married state. Nor even here let him consult the tranquillity and convenience of the flesh, save only that, freed from this tie, he may be the readier and more prepared for all the offices of piety.(36)

Of all Richardson's heroines, only the Catholic Clementina aspires to the specialized vocation of consecrated celibacy, and only the irresistible, reasoned eloquence of Sir Charles can dissuade her from seeking it, when all the representations of her own family have failed to do so. Clarissa's own plea to be allowed to follow the single state does not suggest that she, or Richardson, holds any conviction that celibacy is in itself superior to the state of marriage; the evidence available suggests that Richardson adheres to the Protestant conception of marriage as the proper state for most people, and certainly for the vast majority of women. Clarissa may die unmarried, but her reason for rejecting the belated offers made by Lovelace (and the renewed offer of Mr. Wyerley) makes her one of the exceptions to the general rule of which Calvin speaks. That Richardson accepted that there were such exceptions may be inferred from a remark elsewhere:

> The single state may be said to be fitly marked out by Providence, to those women who never have it in their power fitly to change it. (37)

Clarissa may be seen as both asserting to the end that sense of individual integrity which had preserved her sanity after the rape, and as a woman on whom God *has* bestowed a special grace, who *has* been called to this specialized vocation which Calvin claims is given to few. A modern reader might be able to offer sound reasons, which have less to do with a sense of religious vocation than with psychological trauma, for the choice which Richardson's heroine makes, and this question may be discussed at a later point, but Richardson's own avowed reasons for having her make that choice are those which relate to religion.

On the whole, Richardson's presentation of the married state suggests that he does hold the Christian view of it as ordained by God for the purposes which theology usually distinguishes as being those of procreation and then of

companionship and solace to the partners. St. Augustine had defined the three goods of marriage as procreation, fidelity, and 'sacramentum', a term which did not then suggest the sense in which the later pre-Reformation Church would use the word, but which was meant to be expressive of the indissolubility of Christian marriage, and 'a symbol that in the future we shall all be united and subject to God in the one heavenly city'.[38] Both pre- and post-Reformation theology give primacy of purpose in marriage to procreation. Thomas Aquinas comments:

> Marriage consists essentially in the inseparable union of souls, husband and wife pledging unbreakable loyalty to one another for the purpose of bearing and bringing up children.[39]

Likewise, Calvin stresses the dignity of this conjugal function:

> God intends the human race to be multiplied by generation indeed, not as in brute animals, by promiscuous intercourse. For he has joined the man to his wife, that they might produce a divine, that is, a legitimate seed ... Certainly he does not give the rein to human passions, but, beginning at holy and chaste marriage, he proceeds to speak of the production of offspring.[40]

Richardson does not disregard this important duty of the married state. If Clarissa is not to be fruitful, both Harriet and Pamela are shown to be so shortly after their marriages, and the union of Anna Howe with Mr. Hickman produces at least one child to bear the name of Clarissa. Of Richardson's male characters, it is impossible to doubt that Sir Charles would fulfil his duty to give a Christian education to his children, while Mr. B. becomes the father of a fine family. Even Lovelace, while he does not desire marriage, dwells with pleasure on the idea of paternity, imagining Clarissa nursing twins, or alternatively, both Anna and Clarissa bearing his children. Moreover, he makes a generous provision for his illegitimate off-spring and shows some concern for their mothers. Lovelace has no difficulty in imagining himself as a patriarchal figure, as the third edition shows, [iii, p.474-475] but does not intend to undertake the position of head of a household until age has put an

end to his 'rogueries', nor does he take a serious view of the position's duties. His conduct reflects, in a distorted way, the values of marriage which Richardson endorses; such pleasure in paternity and such concern for his children, if not in the matter of education as much as in material provision, would be admirable in its place. Calvin regards such activity as that of Lovelace, in begetting children outside of the bonds of marriage, as 'a corruption of the Divine institute', and adds:

> Whereas God produces offspring from this muddy pool, as well as from the pure fountain of marriage, this will tend to their greater destruction.(41)

Lovelace's fantasies of union with Clarissa suggest his failure to understand the duties of marriage in other respects. Firstly, he does not intend fidelity, even in a sanctified union as opposed to the 'life of honour'. Nor do his fantasies extend to the education and upbringing of his children; so far from envisaging himself as a constant presence to offer guidance and paternal care, he imagines himself ranging freely to return to Clarissa at will. In the implied condemnation of the fantasies of Lovelace, Richardson appears to be endorsing the contentions of Christian theology that a stable union in which both parents contribute their care and guidance, each undertaking their appropriate duties, is required for the proper up-bringing of children.

St. Paul advised fathers to bring up their children 'in the nurture and admonition of the Lord', (Eph. 6.4) while Aquinas points out that generation itself would be in vain if no due nourishment followed. Moreover, he adds that the needs of human life require many things which one person alone cannot offer, especially instruction for the soul. He claims that a woman is insufficient for the accomplishment of such tasks, since the more perfect reason of the male better fits him to offer instruction. Therefore, the male should remain as long as his presence is

required to this end.[42] The Reformation did not change substantially this view of parental duty, since Calvin tells parents that they should 'carefully bring up, guide and teach their children as a trust committed to them by God'.[43] It is clear that in the marriage which Lovelace fantasizes between himself and Clarissa, he would not have envisaged the performance of the duties of the married state, as a faithful husband, as a parent, or as the moral as well as legal head of the household.

Such a failure to understand the duties of the married state is inseparable from his misunderstanding of its nature. Richardson offers a view of marriage which is essentially that of a Divine institution. To Clarissa, marriage is an 'altar vowed duty'[p.241] and a 'state of purity'.[p.703] This latter remark Lovelace regards as 'comical' when he reports the conversation on the subject between himself and Clarissa to Belford. Such a fundamental difference in the conception of the nature and value of the married state would hold out little prospect for any future harmony or fulfilment for the prospective spouses. Clarissa's view of marriage, however, accords well with the tradition of Christian teaching on the subject. If post-Reformation theology, unlike Roman Catholicism, did not regard marriage as sacramental, it yet regarded the state as Divinely ordained. Calvin points out that the sacred nature of this institution is guaranteed precisely because God is its Author, and is demonstrated by the fact that Adam did not take a wife to himself of his own will, but received her at the hands of God.[44] However, Calvin, together with most Christian commentators of whatever tradition, makes a distinction between the pre-lapsarian union of Adam and Eve, and unions between men and women in their post-lapsarian damaged state. If the Divine institution had remained as God appointed it:

> The sweetest harmony would reign in marriage; because the husband could look up with reverence to God; the woman in this would be a faithful assistant to him; and both, with one consent, would cultivate a holy, as well as friendly and peaceful intercourse.[45]

If post-lapsarian marriage does not approach such perfection, Christian theology still regards it as a holy state. Lovelace's conception of marriage appears to regard it as little more than a social institution established for the sake of inheritance, and in this respect is closer to the views of the philosophers who see the origin of marriage in social utility,(46) or of the satirist who regards the formality of a ceremony as a means of enabling the prospective spouses to indulge their sexual appetites in a socially acceptable manner.(47) Likewise, while Christian theology, both pre- and post-Reformation, regards marriage as providing the legitimate and sanctified expression of sexuality, it would not regard the marriage-bed as a place of licence. St. Augustine had argued that intercourse for the sake of procreation is sanctified, while intercourse for the sake of relieving physical desire is permissible as a concession to human weakness, and quotes St. Paul to this effect. (1 Cor. 7.4)(48) A later formulation of Christian opinion on the subject of marital sexuality suggests a certain ambivalence towards the status of sexuality in marriage:

> Even married sex, adorned with all the honourableness of marriage, carries with it a certain shame, because the movements of the genitals, unlike those of the other external members don't obey reason.(49)

Protestant theology is less censorious on the matter; Calvin argues that Satan has endeavoured to dishonour marriage, but that it deserves due reverence, and that the 'children of God may embrace a conjugal life with a good and tranquil conscience, and husbands and wives may live together in chastity and honour'.(50) However, one way in which he claims that Satan has attempted to dishonour marriage is by inducing married persons to believe that they might indulge in whatever licence they pleased. Such notions of a due moderation are disseminated by the religious conduct books. Jeremy Taylor asserts that married people are

expected to maintain modesty and decency, to behave temperately as to frequency, and to make no unlawful use of lawful liberties:

> In their permissions and license they must be sure to observe the order of nature, and the ends of God ... Concerning which our best rule is, that although in this, as in eating and drinking there is an appetite to be satisfied, which cannot be done without pleasuring that desire, yet since that desire and satisfaction was intended by nature for other ends, they should never be separate from those ends, but alwayes be joyned with all or one of these ends; with a desire of children, or to avoyd fornication, or to lighten and ease the cares and sadnesses of household affairs, or to endear each other; but never with a purpose either in act or desire to separate the sensuality from these ends which hallow it.(51)

Such moderation would be incomprehensible to Lovelace, who seeks to indulge in what he calls 'innocent freedoms' before any proposed union with Clarissa could take place, and appears to believe that a marriage would sanction all and any usage, including his freedom to commit adultery, or would compensate fully for any sexual abuse before the ceremony,(iii, p.412) a view that Richardson is at pains to condemn elsewhere.(52) Such views do not do justice to a wife or to society – the original bond of which, as Christian commentators have pointed out, is marriage. Nor do they tend to the fulfilment of the Divinely established ordering of human existence. They also confirm that between Clarissa and the man who seeks, belatedly, to marry her, there is a fundamental and irreconcilable difference in their respective conceptions of the meaning of marriage.

Clarissa's reservations about marriage to Lovelace, not to mention the abhorrence aroused in her by the very notion of a union with Solmes, are all the more understandable if the marriage bond is perceived as being as much a spiritual union as a physical, since as such, the fulfilment – or not – of its duties must have its effect on the eternal welfare of the spouses. In relation to Lovelace, as to Solmes, Clarissa fears that such a union would not only deprive her of temporal happiness but also

would put at risk her happiness in the hereafter.(53) She asserts that even to think of a union with Lovelace is a 'high degree of impurity', adding her fears:

> That he is young, unbroken, his passions unsubdued: that he is violent in his temper, yet artful: I am afraid vindictive too: that such a husband might unsettle me in all my principles, and hazard my future hopes.(p.183)

Clarissa expresses this fear early in the novel, before she becomes as fully aware as she ever becomes of Lovelace's character and intentions. After the rape, marriage with such a man becomes a moral impossibility, despite the fact that it would offer some restoration of her reputation, but by that time, Clarissa has lost all concern for temporal affairs, and the question that she poses to Anna demonstrates at once her conception of the spiritual as well as of the physical intimacy of marriage and the primacy which she gives to salvation above all other values. 'Can I vow duty to one so wicked', she asks' 'And hazard my salvation by joining myself to so great a profligate, now I *know* him to be so?'(p.1116) She adds that she could not believe her penitence for her 'rash step' to be anything but a 'specious delusion' if she retained the least desire to marry Lovelace. She thus shows herself aware of the complexities which exist in the position of a wife, bound by vow to obey her husband, but as a Christian soul, enjoined to avoid any situation which could lead to sin and the loss of salvation. Clarissa is determined to preserve her soul intact from such a catastrophic loss, aware that the very intimacy of marriage exposes a woman to its peculiar dangers in this respect:

> And, after all, who knows but that my own sinful compliances with a man who would think himself entitled to my obedience might taint my own morals, and make me, instead of a reformer, an imitator of him? – for who *can touch pitch and not be defiled*?(p.1116)

When Richardson commented in the Preface to Clarissa that he wished to caution children against accepting the notion *that a reformed rake makes the best*

husband, his warning was concerned with even more important penalties for reposing trust in the maxim than that of the misery in this life that a woman might expect with a husband only dubiously faithful.

Clarissa is not over-scrupulous in fearing that a union with Lovelace could affect, unfavourably, her eternal welfare, given the primacy of a husband's authority and influence over his wife. Richardson presents the married state, on the whole, as that which is most desirable from the point of view of the individual and society, although he is too realistic not to suggest the pains and difficulties of the state in this post-lapsarian world. His treatment suggests that, at best, it may offer to the individual a comfort and intimate companionship not to be found elsewhere. He also offers the view that entering upon the married state should be regarded as a duty undertaken in response to the will of God, and for the good of man. A refusal to marry, based on selfish reasons, such as those embodied in Lovelace's refusal to accept any curb on his freedom, not only confirms Lovelace's libertine principles, but suggests his failure to undertake a duty to society and to understand the Divinely ordained nature of the married state. Richardson suggests such a view in a letter to Hester Mulso in which he writes of the possible fate of Clementina should she die unmarried: 'Her duty on earth, unperformed, in the highest characters that a woman can shine in!'.(54) Those 'highest characters' of which he speaks can only be those of wife and mother, and Richardson's remark therefore suggests the importance that he attached to the undertaking of the duties of the married state and to their faithful performance. However, it is equally clear that such an undertaking requires constant attention to the demands of justice in a concern for the general good of all interested parties, and of society, which cannot be related only to the fulfilment of any legal

codification, but must also take the requirements of right reason as its frame of reference.

> 'Justice', asserts Aquinas, 'is a virtue because it regulates human action according to a standard of right reason, and so renders it good'.(55) Justice, therefore, must apportion rights and duties, so that if such a prescription were followed in the conduct of family life, the spouses would undertake their respective duties in harmony and perfect accord, each in full awareness as to how such duties were best to be defined, and then performed. The resulting state might then be regarded as that sanctioned by both Divine and human laws.

The Christian interpretation of those laws, over the centuries, beginning with the pronouncements of St. Paul (Col. 3.18; Tit. 2.5) and St. Peter (1 Pet. 3.1 and 5), apportioned to the woman obedience and subjection, and government to the man. Both pre- and post-Reformation theology thereafter endorse this distribution of duties as being in accordance with right reason and God's law. The natural inferiority of women does not seem anywhere to be questioned by Christian theologians. St. Augustine comments that 'the male sex ... is surely the better',(56) while Aquinas remarks upon 'the natural inequality and subordination of women to men, who are by nature more reasonable and discerning.(57) Calvin accepts that women, like men, are created in the image of God, but qualifies this remark by adding 'although in the second degree'.(58) Such views find an echo in Richardson's remark in a letter to Stinstra: 'Don't you think, Sir, that women are generally more susceptible of levity than men?'(59) However, as William and Malleville Haller have pointed out, some traditions of Protestant thought, at least, while maintaining the notion of female

inferiority, yet claimed that women were to be regarded as being only a little lower in status than men.[60]

It would be surprising if Richardson's heroines, given their piety, were to regard the woman's lot in marriage as anything other than subjection, and if instead they were to subscribe to the subversive views of such early feminists as Mary Astell.[61] The woman fortunate enough to marry Sir Charles Grandison thanks God for having been bestowed upon 'such a Friend, Protector, Director, Husband', and prays that her power of obliging him may be increased.[VII, p.457] She does not question his power over her. Clarissa, whose prospective spouses, Solmes and Lovelace, offer her far less for which to be grateful, finds her position rendered all the more painful in that marriage would make her subject to men who are morally, and in the case of Solmes, intellectually inferior to herself. However, she does not question the right – and duty – of the husband to direct and command. She writes to her uncle Antony to make this very point:

> Dear, dear, sir, if I *am* to be compelled, let it be in favour of a man that can read and write – that can *teach* me something: for what a husband must that man make, who can do nothing but command; and needs himself the instruction he should be qualified to give?[p.151]

Elsewhere, she refers to the respect which a good wife should pay her husband, and wish everybody to pay him.[p.111] Clarissa's remarks demonstrate that she accepts the established position that a husband is entitled to the obedience of his wife, but imply that she perceives how problematic such a position is, when the husband is unworthy of the prerogative which both law and Christian tradition give him.

Opinions might vary among theologians as to whether female subordination pre-dated the fall or was part of Eve's punishment for her transgression,[62] but that subordination was according to nature and reason was generally accepted by

Christian commentators, and institutionalized by society. Even when John Locke denies that the words of Genesis 3.16 gave Adam any authority over Eve, or men over their wives, he admits that they did foretell what would be the woman's lot, how God would order human society to ensure female subjection:

> How by His Providence He would order it so that she should be subject to her husband, as we see that generally the laws of mankind and the custom of nations have ordered it so.(63)

Richardson himself appears to accept without question the orthodox view of religion and society that female subordination is ordained by God, and makes this point in a letter to Sarah Chapone:

> It is certain that the Woman's Subordination was laid upon her as a Punishment. And why? – Because *Adam was not deceived*, says the Apostle; *but the Woman being deceived, was in the Transgression*. I allow, that but for this Transgression, all wou'd have been Peace, Love, Harmony, and when that is in the married State now, there is no Superiority, no Inferiority; nor *could* there have been *then*.(64)

He adds that 'Subordination ... is not a punishment but to perverse or arrogant Spirits', but he does not deny that subordination exists, or that it should exist. Nor does he define what might constitute perversity and arrogance of spirit. Most of the husbands, or prospective husbands drawn by Richardson, do not display the qualities of wisdom, charity and justice which could make subjection a light yoke for a wife to bear. Only Sir Charles is such that Harriet may rejoice to have such a 'Director'. The reader might imagine that Anna would more suffer the pains of subjection, married to the mild Mr. Hickman, by her awareness that she *is* legally his dependent and his inferior in the eyes of religion and society, rather than by any imposition of authority on his part. It is not be be imagined that Clarissa, espoused either to Mr. Solmes or to Lovelace could have found her yoke so light, nor that either man would have wielded his authority in the manner prescribed by Jeremy Taylor:

> The Husband must rule over the wife, as the soul does over the body, obnoxious to the same sufferings, and bound by the same affections, and doing or suffering by the permissions and interest of each other.[65]

If perhaps a husband took care to fulfil the duties of his superior status in the manner recommended by Taylor, the pains of subjection for his wife might, as Richardson claims in his letter to Sarah Chapone, be lessened, even if she were aware, as Anna Howe might be aware, of some natural superiority of mind or spirit of her own. Taylor does not fail to assert the right of the male to rule in marriage in his analogy between the relative position of husband and wife and those of the soul and the body; these are indissolubly wedded, just as husband and wife are so united, but the husband and the soul are seen as the rightfully superior partners in these respective unions. The position of a wife who could truthfully claim, as Clarissa does to Lovelace, 'My soul is above thee, man!'[(p.646)] must then be painful in the extreme. In view of this manifest superiority, it is not surprising that Clarissa expresses her rejection of Lovelace in terms which might otherwise seem extreme. After the rape she scornfully tells him that 'it would be *criminal* in me to wish to bind my soul in covenant to a man so nearly allied to perdition'.[(p.902)]

Even if the reader were not meant, as Richardson means him or her to be, to see Clarissa's rejection of any earthly union in favour of a Divine consummation as the result of a special grace, her rejection of Lovelace would be justified in terms of merely human prudence. When a man shows himself so unaware of the sacred nature of marriage, and has no intention of maintaining that fidelity which St. Augustine defines as one of the three goods of the married state; when the writers of the conduct books recommend that a wife endure infidelity, rather than leave an unchaste husband to go to his ruin,[(66)] marriage with such as Lovelace holds out hardly even a

distant prospect of happiness in this life, and must carry the very real risk of compromising any happiness in the next.

6

Temptation and Trial

The difficulties and problems inseparable from such intimate human relationships as those discussed in the previous chapter furnish a sharp reminder of the imperfections of fallen human nature. Such difficulties, together with the natural accidents of disease or injury, befalling the innocent and guilty alike, may be attributed by the theologian or the moralist to the indirect effects of man's primary disobedience resonating throughout the whole realm of nature, a notion which has had a widespread currency. 'Religion informs us', says Dr. Johnson, 'That misery and sin were produced together. The depravation of human will was followed by a disorder of the harmony of nature'.[(1)]

No Christian commentator who addresses the problem of human suffering seems to doubt that this earthly life is a time of trials, but it is generally agreed that if these are endured with courage, patience and faith, they may not only be overcome - with the grace of God – but may also be a means of achieving a heavenly reward. The notion that trial is inevitable in this life, and is ordained by God, who expects a positive response to it, is already well-established in the infancy of the Church. St. Augustine writes:

> Is not our life on earth a period of trial? For who would wish for hardship and difficulty? You command us to endure these troubles, not to love them. No-one loves what he endures, even though he may be glad to endure it. For though he may rejoice in his power of endurance, he would prefer that there should be nothing for him to endure.[(2)]

The notion of trial as a condition of human experience pre-dates Christianity itself, since Genesis offers in the narrative of Adam and Eve the spectacle of

humanity faced with its first trial, that of obedience, which it miserably fails. If man in his pre-lapsarian state of innocence, possessed of an integrated nature which enabled him to subject at will his passions to his reason, could yet fail, there can be nothing to surprise the Christian believer in the fact that Adam's posterity, deprived by that failure of both innocence and integration, should be likely to follow his fatal example. For Adam and Eve, no less than for their descendants, theologians assert, trial was permitted by God as a test of faithfulness to His commandments, and conducted by means of the instrumentality of a being who had already failed his own trial of obedience, Satan. The poet with whom Richardson was so familiar, Milton, expresses this well-established belief, held by Christians of all persuasions:

> For what can scape the eye
> Of God all-seeing, or deceive his heart
> Omniscient? who in all things wise and just,
> Hindered not Satan to attempt the mind
> Of Man, with strength entire and free will armed
> Complete to have discovered and repulsed
> Whatever wiles of foe or seeming friend.(3)

Nor, as Christian tradition accepts, have such evil spirits ceased their activities in subjecting – with Divine permission – humanity to similar trials in the long ages succeeding that first failure. Such trials are not permitted, we are told, with the intention on the part of the Deity that man should fail and earn punishment, still less the damnation that befell Satan and his followers, but so that he should triumph over them with the help of grace. Thomas à Kempis, makes this very point. Writing of temptation, he says:

> In all these trials, our progress is tested; in them great merit may be secured, and our virtue become evident. It is no great matter if we are devout and fervent when we have no troubles; but if we show patience in adversity, we can make great progress in virtue.(4)

This is exactly Clarissa's experience, whether her trials are those of temptation to sin or of sufferings imposed upon her by the persecutions of others.

The notion of trial as an indispensable part of human and of Christian experience is something which Richardson accepted as a man, and to which he gave explicit expression as an author. His hero and heroines are seen to undergo their own trials, both those of undeserved afflictions peculiar to themselves, and those of the temptations which afflict all fallen mankind in general, and which may be seen as the results either of a direct assault by the powers of evil on their spiritual integrity, or of the promptings of that fallen nature. His view, expressed in a letter to Lady Bradshaigh, seems to have been that trial is inevitable in this life, and however painful, is not undesirable, since a heavenly reward may result:

> A writer who follows Nature and pretends to keep the Christian System in his Eye, cannot make a Heaven in this World for his Favourites; or represent this Life otherwise than as a State of Probation ... What greater moral Proof can be given of a World after this, for the rewarding of suffering Virtue, and the punishing of oppressive Vice, than the Inequalities in the Distribution of Rewards and Punishments here below?(5)

Richardson expressed this conviction again, in the Postscript to the third edition, when he answered the objections of those who claimed that his novel's resolution violated poetic justice. He pointed out that he was 'well-justified by the Christian system, in deferring to extricate suffering virtue to the time in which it will meet with the completion of its reward'.(iv, p.554) His remarks conclude with the assertion that 'the notion of poetical justice ... has hardly ever been more strictly observed in works of this nature than in the present performance'.(iv, p.557) He bases this claim on the grounds that his villains are punished and the virtuous are made happy. The reader of the novel may conclude that in Richardson's presentation, it is in some measure by means of the response to the inevitable trials of life that this distribution is effected.

The reward for enduring trials and for withstanding temptation is well worth the having, but it requires the assistance of God in the acquisition, since as Aquinas points out:

> Eternal life is a goal out of all proportion to human nature ... Man does however will and do things which earn him eternal life, but only because his will has been prepared for it by God through his grace.(6)

Richardson's hero and heroines, particularly Clarissa, never cease to seek that goal of eternal life whatever their trials, but always assisted by grace. For Clarissa, at least, the reader may assume at the end of her history, that the reward is won by the patience with which she has endured persecution, abduction, imprisonment and sexual abuse. It may be assumed that while God permits such trials at the hands of others, He is not the cause of the sins of their perpetrators, since such sins take their origin from the misuse of reason and free will on the part of such sinners as Lovelace, the Harlowes, and Mrs. Sinclair and her girls. Calvin endorses St. Augustine's words on the subject, quoting the earlier theologian as his authority for his own opinion that God does not will sinners to sin:

> In a wonderful and ineffable way, what was done contrary to His will was yet not done without His will, because it would not have been done at all unless He allowed it. So He permitted it not unwillingly but willingly.(7)

He adds, speaking of both men and angels, that, 'In sinning, they did what God did not will in order that God through their evil will might do what He willed'. In Clarissa, Lovelace, in particular, places himself voluntarily at 'the service of sin', and precipitates himself to destruction(8), but in doing so, he has become the instrument of Clarissa's trials, both because he imposes on her suffering which must be patiently endured, and because, in himself, he represents temptations of which she may not herself be fully aware.

In common with those of Richardson's other heroines and of his hero, Sir Charles, Clarissa's experiences serve to demonstrate the Christian believer's acknowledgement that even the virtuous are not exempt from trial, and are certainly not exempt from temptation; they share the same fallen nature and are subject to the same weaknesses as the common run of humanity. If their trials, of whatever kind, have a triumphant conclusion, it is because they seek and obtain the grace of God as their indispensable support. St. Augustine makes the point which Christian thinkers incorporated into the body of orthodoxy in various forms:

> It is to be observed that temptation does not always imply anything blameworthy, since the testing that brings approval is a matter for rejoicing. And as a general rule, there is no other way in which the human spirit can acquire self-knowledge except by trying its own strength in answering, not in word but in deed, what may be called the interrogation of temptation. And then, if God acknowledges the task performed, there is an example of a spirit truly devoted to God, with the solidity given by the strength of grace, instead of the inflation of the empty boast.(9)

More than a thousand years later, Milton offers much the same consideration when he asserts that temptation is either good or evil.(10) God uses good temptations, he tells us, to prove the righteous, knowing what the result will be, but in order that He may demonstrate or exercise their faith or patience. However, He may also tempt such people in order to lessen their self-confidence and to reveal their weaknesses, so that they may become wiser thereby, and may serve to instruct others. God's justice in such procedures is never at fault, even when what Milton describes as evil temptation is seen to operate, those occasions on which God withdraws His grace, or throws opportunities in man's way, or hardens his heart, or blinds him. Such temptations are evil from the point of view of the man who is tempted, but just on God's part, since they may unmask such hidden sins as hypocrisy. Milton asserts

that God tempts no-one to sin, but may justly allow some men to be tempted by the devil.

Milton's remarks demonstrate the consistency of Christian thought over the centuries on such questions, and Christian experience establishes that the soul which seeks God may indeed come to see temptation, this specific form of trial, as a means of sanctification, and resistance, assisted by grace, as a manner in which God may be glorified. In The Imitation of Christ, the disciple addresses Christ to this effect:

> I know that it is by Your will that temptation and trouble come upon me. I cannot escape it, but must needs come to You for help, that it may be turned to my good ... Yet it is for Your glory that I have been brought to this hour, and that I may learn that You alone can deliver me from the depths of my humiliation.(11)

Clarissa voices sentiments which closely echo these, at a point when her trials have as yet hardly begun, and when she does not yet know, despite her earnest self-searchings and applications to Anna for helpful insights into her faults, the nature of the weaknesses that she must overcome. It does not appear that she has so far ever been exposed to the test of any strong temptation to serious sin, but she writes as if she has a premonition of such trials to come:

> Who knows what the justice of Heaven may inflict in order to convince us that we are not out of the reach of misfortune; and to reduce us to a better reliance than we have hitherto presumptuously made?(p.333)

The trials of misfortune might be seen as those of imprisonment, rejection by her family, and a violent assault on her person, as well as the general contempt society reserves for any woman unfortunate enough to be in her position, but among her spiritual trials will be the temptations to rely too much on her own strength, and to attribute to herself, as she later acknowledges that she has done, credit for graces bestowed on her by God. Both external afflictions and trials of her soul's probity must be met with the humility which is demonstrated by the disciple in

St. Thomas à Kempis's Dialogue quoted above, a humility which acknowledges a total dependence on God, for such is the way to delivery and exaltation. It is to this state of total dependence that Clarissa will finally come, but in doing so, she finds that such dependence is her triumph and fulfilment.

It is difficult, both for the Christian commentator and for the reader of Clarissa, to define the exact origin of any given temptation but theologians have addressed the problem, and the reader of Clarissa needs to do so if he is to understand why Richardson declares his heroine a saint, and to ascertain what kind of saint she is. Aquinas offers this discussion of the problem:

> Indirectly the devil is the cause of all our sins, since it was he who led the first man into sin, and as a result of that sin, human nature is so weakened that we are all prone to sin. But he is not a direct cause, persuading to each and every sin, as Origen showed when he said *that even if there were no devil, men would still desire food and sex and the like, and whether those desires were controlled by reason or not would be up to our free will.*(12)

To the direct assaults of the devil and the desires of the flesh must be added the attractions of the world, of wealth and status, as sources of temptation and sin. Richardson's characters meet with all three species of temptation. The very existence of Mrs. Sinclair and her daughters exemplifies the desires of the flesh in their most blatant form. The Harlowes have succumbed to the attractions of wealth and status at the expense of their spiritual probity. It may be concluded that both Clarissa and Lovelace face the most subtle onslaughts of the enemy in that their presiding faults are those of the intellect; in them, the seat of reason is itself under attack. Lovelace does not recognize that such temptations have been presented – or ignores the fact – and that he has succumbed, but Clarissa learns to acknowledge humbly that her trials have brought her to an understanding of the temptation to which she has unwittingly succumbed, and to seek the grace of repentance:

> And now, being led to account for the cause of my temporary calamities, find I had a secret pride to be punished for, which I had not fathomed: and it was necessary perhaps that some sore and terrible misfortunes should befall me in order to mortify my pride and my vanity.
>
> Temptations were accordingly sent. I shrunk in the day of trial. My discretion, which had been so cried up, was found wanting when it came to be weighed in an equal balance.(p.1375)

The insight which Clarissa offers here accords with the doctrines of Christian orthodoxy, whatever differences in tradition. She does not claim that God has led her into sin, but that by allowing her to be exposed to temptation, He has allowed her to fall, so that the secret vices which would have marred her soul and compromised her salvation, have been exposed. She can thus seek grace to amend them. Of such situations as Clarissa's, Aquinas had claimed that while one outcome of sin may be the damnation which it brings on itself, the other is a healing 'attached to it in the plan of a merciful God who allows some to fall into sin in order that they may recognize it, be humbled and turn back to Him'.(13)

Clarissa's sense that God has permitted temptation and failure in order to bring about a spiritual healing does not lead to any complacency on her part, but must suggest a certain ambiguity to the reader. Belford records that when she is dying, she rejoices that all her dangers may be said to be past, after having been 'so much exposed to temptation, and to be so liable to fail in the trial'.(p.1375) She might be referring here to her mortified pride, since pride is the past sin to which she has confessed, and will confess again before she dies. But pride is an ever-present temptation as long as the intellect is clear, and Clarissa's intellect never fails her even when her frail body reaches the point of death. She cannot therefore claim that all danger is past if the temptation of pride is the only one to which she has been exposed. Her pride she can freely acknowledge, but it is not impossible that the

temptation she mentions here, from which she is now safe, could have been of a different kind.

The trials which have exposed to her both the frailties of humankind, and her own vulnerability to them, have been those which have arisen from her relationship with Lovelace. Had she felt only revulsion towards him, as she did to Solmes, he could never have represented any temptation to her other than the temptation to express such revulsion with inordinate vehemence, so violating charity. Temptation, however, can only possess any force when some object or objective is desired. Clarissa declares here that she was 'so liable to fail in the trial', but nothing in her circumspect conduct has given the reader any reason to suppose that she might have succumbed to his advances. However, it may well be that the attraction which she will only acknowledge, or even recognize, as 'a conditional kind of liking', or by admitting that she could have loved him, has represented for her an error in itself, without needing to go any further by consciously responding to his courtship. From the moment she undertook her clandestine correspondence with Lovelace, Clarissa exposed herself to the possibilities of temptations which she did not allow herself to recognize as such. Whatever her unconscious motivation in doing so, her assertion that the temptations to which she has been so liable to succumb are past, and that this is a matter for rejoicing, even in the face of imminent death, suggests that she has come by means of her exposure to such temptations, of whatever nature, assisted by grace, to seek God, and to find in Him her own salvation, whether that salvation is to be regarded as access to eternal life, or as safety, both from Lovelace's persecutions and from any temptations which he might represent.

If Clarissa can admit that she has been beset by temptations, of whatever nature, Lovelace, her adversary, is as ready as she is herself to admit to his pride.

The one essential difference is that he does not appear to perceive this intellectual sin *as* a sin, the result of a temptation that should have been resisted, or as a conquest over him by the powers of evil. Instead, he embraces that pride to the extent that he will readily identify himself with those evil powers. Such an identification may be perceived as one example of Lovelace's constant assumption of a variety of rôles, but the identification is too frequently made, both by Lovelace himself and by others, not to signal to the reader that Richardson has a point to make both about the nature of temptation and about the result of succumbing to it.

Lesley Berry has pointed out that Lovelace's temptation and deception of Clarissa echo that of Eve by Satan, as Milton describes it, in that both Satan and Lovelace falsely promise deliverance, and their victims are subsequently cursed, by God and by Mr. Harlowe, their respective fathers. Moreover, Clarissa describes her experience as a 'fall', the term always employed to describe Eve's sin and her expulsion from the Garden.(14) Leaving aside the question as to whether the Harlowe household, with all its materialism, malice and cruelty, may be considered as an analogue to the paradise from which Eve is expelled, if this parallel is otherwise accepted it may be seen to be consistent with the ancient Christian belief that the wicked may be used as the instruments of Satan in temptation. St. Augustine points out that just as Satan was God's instrument in the testing of Job, so He may allow some people to be persecuted through the wickedness of others:

> It must be observed that when any man suffers any harm through the wickedness or the mistake of another, then that other human being commits a sin in doing some harm to another man either through ignorance or through ill-will; God commits no sin in allowing that wrong to happen by his decision, which is just, albeit inscrutable.(15)

If these remarks are applied to Clarissa's situation, and if Lovelace may be seen as such an instrument by which she is allowed to suffer both temptation and external trials, then her very acknowledgement of hidden sins, of the pride which led her to continue the clandestine correspondence with Lovelace, and perhaps of the unadmitted and largely unconscious impulses of an attraction which could have made that correspondence itself attractive, represent an admission that the justice of God has demanded an expiation. Clarissa's frequent assertions of her culpability, which may seem excessive to the reader, for which God has mercifully punished her, may then not be seen as the result of an over-scrupulous or morbidly sensitive nature. Christian theology, as Richardson is at pains to remind the reader implicitly, has a place both for temptation and trial as a means of testing the individual soul, and for revealing to that soul weaknesses to be repented and repaired for the sake of salvation. Clarissa had failed to recognize – or to resist – the temptations thrown her way by the instrumentality of Lovelace, but she has come to recognize and repent of that failure. Successive theologians reiterated St. Augustine's contention that certain individuals may assume the rôle of instruments in the testing of others. However, sometimes they are perceived as the instruments of Satan, but sometimes also of God. Of the former rôle, Aquinas comments:

> The devil tests in order to harm people and throw them into sin: indeed this sort of tempting is regarded as his special job, and when a man does it he is regarded as an agent of the devil.[16]

Likewise, Calvin would see such a man as Lovelace as an instrument of God in the same way that the devil was His instrument when He tested Job:

> Scripture teaches that the reprobate are also instruments of God's wrath, for by some He instructs His faithful in patience, and on others He inflicts the punishments which as enemies they merit.[17]

Whether Lovelace is to be regarded as the instrument of God or as the agent of the devil in relation to the trials which Clarissa undergoes, he is only too ready to claim the rôle of tempter. 'What is it', he writes to Belford, 'She ought not to expect from an unchained Beelzebub, and a plotting villain?'[(p.878)] Like Milton's Satan, he seeks to despoil a virtue he has himself lost. 'By my soul, I cannot forgive her for her virtues',[(p.853)] he says, and shows himself as aware as any theologian – or devil – that in the matter of temptation, it is the yielding of the will that makes the sin, by his remark that '*There's no triumph over the will in force*'.[(p.879)]

Lovelace's self-identification with Milton's Satan is a matter of satisfaction to him, an instance of the rôle-playing which is part of his pleasure in plot and intrigue, but there is an irony which he fails to perceive in that either as God's instrument or the devil's, in exercising his own free will to tempt, he also fulfils the will of another. At Hampstead he tells Belford that like Satan, surprised out of his disguise by Ithuriel's spear, 'I started up in my own form divine'.[(p.772)] However, in his self-congratulation, Lovelace has forgotten that in this episode Milton's Satan is perceived by the two angels who have disturbed him in his temptation of Eve as 'the grisly King'[(18)] and that Satan is struck with regret, as Lovelace will come to be, for what he has lost by his own wilful choice:

> Abashed the Devil stood,
> And felt how awful goodness is, and saw
> Virtue in her shape how lovely – saw, and pined
> His loss.[(19)]

As a result of assuming the rôle of tempter, Lovelace's loss will be twofold, and both will be losses of what is lovely, of an honest love in this world, and of his soul in the next. Meanwhile, his transformation as he removes his disguise and congratulates himself on the impact that his youth and beauty have on Mrs. Moore and her friends offers an ironic commentary on St. Augustine's warning of the

dangers of demons who present themselves disguised as angels of light. Lovelace thinks that he has removed one disguise, but its removal merely presents the onlookers with an appearance that disguises the evil in his heart. St. Augustine tells his readers of such demons:

> But their most effective hold upon the hearts of mortals (and it is in the possession of them that they especially glory) is gained when they transform themselves into angels of light.(20)

Clarissa has been too clear-sighted to regard Lovelace as an angel of light, even before she becomes fully aware of his character and intentions, but she does come to identify him with Satan, recognizing the rôle he has assumed in testing her virtue. It is true that she never succumbs to sexual sin as the other objects of Lovelace's attentions have done, but she does become aware of the dangers that he represents, and that he is in some sense aligned with the powers of evil:

> Oh Lovelace, you are Satan himself; or he helps you out in everything; and that's as bad!
>
> But have you really and truly sold yourself to him? And for how long? What duration is your reign to have? Poor man! The contract *will* be out; and then what will be your fate!(p.894)

If Satan's purpose on earth is to ruin souls, Clarissa's perception, focusing with compulsive force on the experiences which have befallen her, and illuminating harshly the relationship which has existed between herself and Lovelace, victim and tempter, expresses the situation in terms of the conflict which exists between mankind and this ancient enemy. However, her distraught state does not deprive her of the knowledge that the instruments of evil, entering into a Faustian pact, or Satan himself, must eventually suffer for what they do, even if at present she recognizes that the aim of such powers is to encompass 'the ruin of my soul, that my father's curse may be fulfilled ... to complete the triumphs of so vile a confederacy'.(p.900)

A further comment of hers suggests her understanding of the nature of temptation, but raises a question as to what her temptations have been. The Satan of Paradise Lost offers Eve the temptation which holds out the fulfilment of a desire for power and knowledge, a fulfilment which will remove from her the essential quality by which both God and Adam seem to define her rôle, that of her willing submission to both. The reader of Richardson's novel may question what hidden inclinations Clarissa has, or has had, when she tells Lovelace, 'Thou art surely nearly allied to the grand deceiver in thy endeavour to suit temptations to inclinations!'.(p.928)

Ostensibly, she speaks of the immediate temptation offered by 'Captain Tomlinson's' mediation in an apparent attempt to reconcile her to the Harlowes by means of marriage to Lovelace. The reader has no reason to dismiss Clarissa's claim to have abandoned any thoughts of such a marriage, but the question must be asked whether she has learned of Lovelace's satanic ability to offer temptations suited to inclinations by reflecting upon past experiences of such temptations which may have found a response in her own heart. Lovelace reports her in the moment of rejecting him yet again at this point, as praying 'in a kind of frenzy', 'Blessed, blessed God ... save me, Oh save me from myself, and from this man!'(p.929) It is obvious in what danger she stands from *Lovelace*, but the reader may ask what prompts Clarissa to seek to be saved from *herself*, and may conclude that Lovelace can indeed offer what is desirable, or may himself be so.

Clarissa's sense of being subjected to the direct assaults of Satan in a personal encounter, is one which is not uncommon in Christian experience. Calvin says of Satan:

> Truth he assails with lies, light he obscures with darkness. The minds of men he involves in error; he stirs up hatred, inflames strife and war, and all in order that he may overthrow the Kingdom of God, and drown men in eternal perdition with himself.(21)

He might be speaking of the activities of Lovelace. The Gospel reminds us that even Christ was subject to such an encounter, (Matt. 4.1-11), and Milton's Jesus in Paradise Regained undergoes in His own person such a conflict, repeating that of Adam, but where one man, despite the integration of his nature and the availability of grace, failed, Jesus is exposed in the wilderness to trial by a God who knows that His Son will triumph and redeem mankind from the condemnation merited by Adam's failure. Unlike Clarissa, Jesus recognizes Satan in the disguise he has assumed from the start:

> Why dost thou, then, suggest to me distrust,
> Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art?(22)

Unlike Satan in his recognition of Jesus, Lovelace does not initially recognize the quality of the woman he proposes to try by the test of seduction. However, Milton's Satan does as Lovelace does, he disingenuously claims that he means mankind no harm. We might be reminded that Lovelace too professes to Clarissa that he means her no harm, but only offers protection:

> Men generally think me much a foe
> To all mankind: why should I? they to me
> Never did wrong or violence, by them
> I lost not what I lost.(23)

The setting for Jesus's temptations, triumphantly overcome, the wilderness, serves to remind us that the soul meets the tempter in a wilderness of its own, where reason struggles with the chaos of deceptions and passions. Even before Clarissa leaves Harlowe Place she has begun the struggle with her own tempter, but at a remove through correspondence, and, as some commentators have pointed out, she now finds in the world outside, especially within the confines of Mrs. Sinclair's house, a place of moral chaos.(24) In this relationship with Lovelace and in this house, she is as much locked in battle with the representative of Satan as ever Milton's Jesus is

shown to be, in the wide spaces of the desert with Satan himself. Temptation does not, after all, depend upon location, but is essentially a struggle within the soul. However, Clarissa does not triumph so unequivocally; Lovelace's pride tempts her own, and his seductiveness calls forth an unrecognized or unacknowledged response in herself. Clarissa may fairly claim to be innocent of having provoked her tempter's – and would-be seducer's – attentions, but such innocence does not exempt her from undergoing temptations of her own in trying to evade his attempts.

The Christian is required to be as equally unmoved – with Divine assistance – by painful experiences and by persecution as much as by temptation. If the sufferer should ask why God allows such trials, or at least chooses not to prevent affliction, Christian theology has offered a variety of answers, including the assertion that goodness may only be tested by trial. Clarissa, like Richardson's earlier heroine, Pamela, may be said to be defined by her trial, and eventually to be the product of it. She does not provoke the trial by which she is tested, but her experiences remind the reader that for God's mysterious purposes, the good must suffer as much, and sometimes more, than the wicked, even as they are not exempt from the specialized trial of temptation. Even if the virtuous and the wicked are subjected to similar trials, however, the effects of that suffering, as St. Augustine points out, may be very different:

> When the good and the wicked suffer alike, the identity of their sufferings does not mean that there is no difference between them. Though the sufferings are the same, the sufferers remain different. Virtue and vice are not the same even if they undergo the same torment. The fire which makes gold shine makes chaff smoke ... [(25)]

Although Lovelace must be seen as the instigator of Clarissa's trial, or the instrument by which she is tested, there is a point at which he himself undergoes a

trial which has some remarkable similarities to a part of Clarissa's own experience, and which opens up the question of the function of trial, as outlined by St. Augustine in the quotation above. As Carol Houlihan Flynn has noted, both Clarissa and Lovelace are driven to the borders of insanity, she by rape and he by her death and his recognition of his own part in causing it, and have similar memories of their respective experiences, which turn upon the loss of their sense of self.[26] However, the outcomes of their respective trials are widely different. Clarissa has already begun to acknowledge the faults of which she has been guilty, and to repent of them, by the time of the rape. This further trial and the near madness which succeeds it point to the presence of grace already gained, which sustains her in her sufferings and enables her to undertake the rigorous self-examination by which she is able to exonerate herself of any complicity. Her trial, and her response to it, indicates the future saint; it both tests and helps to form her. Lovelace's response to a similar trial reveals the weakness of a soul which is devoid of grace, and because he *does* lack the grace which sustains Clarissa, he cannot respond in a manner which would re-form him; he cannot acknowledge with humility his sins and truly repent of them. Instead, his pride shrinks from a humiliation which Clarissa is prepared to accept if her soul may thereby be saved. Since Richardson intended Clarissa and Lovelace, the saint and the libertine,[27] to stand opposed, their respective responses to a similar trial have an important place in the scheme of his novel.

That he must have intended to draw the reader's attention to their respective responses to similar trials, the outcome of which in both cases could have been the loss of a sense of self, of identity, is indicated by his making both Clarissa and Lovelace describe their experiences of this particular trial in terms which are notably

alike, terms which express a nightmarish sense of confusion and horror. Clarissa writes to Anna, describing her memories of the rape:

> I was so senseless that I dare not aver that the horrid creatures of the house were personally aiding and abetting: but some visionary remembrances I have of female figures flitting, as I may say, before my sight ... But as these confused ideas might be owing to the terror I had conceived ... (p.1011)

For his part, Lovelace describes his descent into a similar condition of near-madness for Belford:

> I had no distinct ideas, but of dark and confused misery: *it was all conscience and horror* indeed! Thoughts of hanging, drowning, shooting; then rage, violence, mischief, and despair took their turns with me. My lucid intervals still worse, giving me to reflect upon what I *was* the hour before, and what I was likely to be the next, and perhaps for life ... (p.1430)

Both accounts carry the sense of disorientation, of a divorce from reality which gives them their nightmare quality; both accounts also suggest the terrors of a loss of any sense of control and hint at a state bordering on the loss of a sense of self. However, while Clarissa's account conveys fear as the predominant emotion during this experience, that of Lovelace suggests a crisis in which pride and violence are predominant. Kinkead-Weekes points out that they both come to a moment under the pressure of these respective situations in which the cherished, recognized self nearly disintegrates, in response to emotional experiences which they each find virtually unendurable, and he rightly concludes that Lovelace's self-image is 'the mainspring of his life'.(28) Since Richardson elsewhere expresses, through the mouths of other of his characters, the opinion that God asks us to bear only what is in our power to endure,(29) it must be concluded that he would expect the reader to understand that both Clarissa and Lovelace are required to bear trials which take them to this extreme, the sense that they both have of the loss of self; here the familiar image that has sustained that sense of self trembles for both of them on the edge of extinction.

As St. Augustine points out above, the wicked and the virtuous are not alike, and Clarissa and Lovelace respond differently in these similar crises. Her first letter to Anna after the rape expresses her sense of loss and dispossession:

> Once more I have escaped – but alas! *I*, my *best self*, have not escaped! - Oh! Your poor Clarissa Harlowe! *You* also will hate me, I fear! ... But no more of myself! my *lost* self! ... Oh! my best, my dearest, my *only* friend! What a tale have I to unfold! – But still upon *self*! this vile, this hated *self*! ... Self then, be banished from *self* one moment – (for I doubt it *will* for no longer) to enquire after a *dearer* object, my beloved Anna Howe![p.974]

While Clarissa struggles with her sense of dispossession, and seeks to rise above it in a concern for her friend, she yet faces the interrogation of her own heart, the necessity to address the unbearable question as to whether she might be in some measure guilty of complicity in Lovelace's act. The fact that she finds that her will was unviolated, that she was not a participant but a victim merely, and can therefore exonerate herself, does not render any less painful the experience she must undergo in order to arrive at this conclusion by putting her conscience to the test. It may be said therefore that this, her climactic trial and her response to it, ensures that she does not in reality lose her 'best self', but is enabled to find it; her experience thus opens the way to her sanctification. It would not be too much to claim that this trial and response, of all others, enables her to overcome those elements of self that stand between her soul and its heavenly reward, since it is by this trial more than by any other that she comes to acknowledge and repent her sins, not of complicity, but of pride and wilfulness.

Lovelace too faces a trial which is essentially that of the possible loss of a known and cherished image of the self, a self which he is required to interrogate in order to determine its sins and failings. A self that could be an heir to the Kingdom of Heaven may only be found by such a process and by the acknowledgement and

repentance of sin. Unlike Clarissa, who accepts the disintegration of a cherished self-image, the humbling of her pride, and the presence of hidden sins, Lovelace cannot – or will not – stand his trial. Terrified by the possibility of the disintegration of the self he has constructed, he refuses to acknowledge both the full extent of his culpability and the hollowness of the self he fears to lose. He asks Belford:

> Who can bear such reflections as these? To be made to *fear* only, and to fear such wretches too! What a thing was this but *remotely* to apprehend![p.1430]

Lovelace's perception of his self is founded on his pride, and he cannot face the possibility of the loss of the self he presents to the world as the arch-manipulator, the centre of all admiring attention, the controller of the lives of others who is himself subject to no control but the compulsions of his false self. This trial offers him the opportunity to question and to discard that self-image which will eventually carry him beyond the reach of grace. Whether the reader sees Lovelace at this moment as displaying the evidence of reprobation, or as simply choosing to exercise his free will in favour of his pride instead of the acknowledgement of sin and the repentance which would be his salvation, he and Clarissa present opposing responses, one negative and one positive, both to similar trials and to Christ's paradoxical pronouncement, 'He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal'. (John 12.25).

However painful the experience, trial should not be seen as evidence that the sufferer is forgotten by the God who allows the affliction. Even if that affliction represents punishment for sin, it is ultimately for the benefit of the sufferer. St. Augustine makes this point when he reflects on his own experiences,

on the way in which God weaned him from unlawful pleasures by means of suffering, so that he would seek instead the joys which are 'unallied with pain':

> You meant me to find them nowhere but in yourself, O Lord, for you teach us by inflicting pain, you smite so that you may heal, and you kill us so that we may not die away from you.(30)

He concludes that trial may be evidence that God has lessons which we are required to learn for our own good. Christian theologians of differing traditions have frequently been agreed in contending that trial and suffering are not only a necessary component of human experience, but also offer specific benefits. The first of these, as St. Augustine indicates, is the testing of worth,(31) with the prospect of a heavenly reward for those who triumphantly sustain the trial. This is a contention which the respective responses of Clarissa and Lovelace to a similar trial, discussed above, would seem to bear out. On the evidence of Lovelace's remarks on the question of the Divine purpose in allowing suffering, it may be seen that he is as much aware of this Christian belief as is Clarissa. He asks Belford, 'Is not calamity the test of virtue?'.(p.519) Richardson himself, in a letter to Frances Grainger, expresses his own opinion on the matter in terms very close to those he gives to Lovelace. 'Calamity is the *test* of virtue', he says, 'And often the *parent* of it, in minds that prosperity would ruin'.(32)

This notion of suffering as a test of virtue finds its pre-Christian expression in the Book of Job, the part of the Scriptures to which Richardson makes most explicit references in Clarissa, and which had a general significance for writers and readers of the period who concerned themselves with the problem of unmerited suffering.(33) The testing of Job may be considered in Christian thought as a positive experience, an example which prefigures the testing of Christ, and after Him, of all who aspire to

follow Him. When Milton's Satan addresses Jesus in the wilderness, it is this positive aspect of trial that he alludes to:

> I came, among the sons of God, when he
> Gave up into my hands Uzzean Job,
> To prove him, and illustrate his high worth.(34)

Satan's subsequent testing of Jesus proves not only His worth but His readiness to begin the task of Redemption, and leads on to His triumph.(35) If the Son of God Himself should humbly submit to such a test, no Christian could complain if his own worth were tested. Thomas à Kempis makes the point that suffering is not only necessary as the test of a soul's virtue, but also of its ability to progress in the spiritual life. To this end, in a dialogue between Christ and a disciple, he has the former tell the latter, 'You must still be proved in this life, and many trials await you',(36) but a little later the disciple of the dialogue, instructed that Providence oversees all trials, addresses God in terms which Clarissa might have spoken:

> O Father, ever to be honoured, the hour has come which has lain in Your foreknowledge from all eternity, when for a while Your servant will seem utterly defeated; yet let him inwardly feel Your presence. He will be maligned and humiliated, a failure in the eyes of men, broken by suffering and sickness, that with You he may rise again in the light of a new dawn, and receive glory in Heaven.(37)

Clarissa has no doubt that a merciful God oversees her trials. Like the disciple, she learns to trust in the Providence which has allowed her, for His own purposes, to be subjected to such sufferings. She comes to express the view that human suffering may be a Divinely chosen method of rendering the soul fit for heaven, and finds in her own case that God has been especially gracious to her in accelerating the progress of her testing:

> Having finished ... her *probatory course*, at so early a time of life, when many are not ripened by the sunshine of Divine grace for a better [world] till they are 50, 60, or 70 years of age.(p.1406)

Clarissa's confidence in the Providence that oversees her ordeal enables her to seek assistance and comfort from that source rather than from any human agency. Successive Christian thinkers have concluded that in times of suffering, God alone can be the only sure resource. St. Augustine, reflecting on the contrast between the unchanged and unchangeable nature of God and the turbulence and vicissitudes of human existence addresses God:

> You are steadfast, constant in yourself; but we are tossed on a tide that puts us to the proof, and if we could not sob out our troubles in your ear, what should we have left to us?(38)

It takes all of Clarissa's painful experiences to teach her that to be comfortless in human terms is to enjoy the highest comfort of all; she has learned that there can be no comfort which will afford the soul security but that of God Himself. Clarissa's cry, 'But God Almighty would not allow me to depend for comfort upon any but Himself!'(p.1356) comes very close to that of the disciple in The Imitation of Christ who also recognizes that God's is the only comfort to afford rest to the soul in anguish:

> No mortal man can comfort me, and if only I could renounce all human comfort ... then I could rightly trust entirely to Your grace, and rejoice in the gift of Your renewed comfort.(39)

Christian theology recommends that suffering should be met with patience and endurance, and that the exercise of these qualities in times of trial will bring both merit and the development of a deeper spiritual maturity. It is for God to propose the trial; it is for the Christian soul to endure it in trust. The experiences of the great Biblical exemplar, Job, demonstrate that however hopeless and arbitrary the trial may seem to be, the Christian soul must cling to its trust that it answers God's purposes. Clarissa shows herself aware of a need for patient endurance, and of the fact that this

cannot be achieved without Divine assistance: 'I hope I shall have more grace given me than to despond, in the *religious* sense of the word', she writes to Anna, and adds:

> I must have more conflicts. At times I find myself not subdued enough to my condition. I will welcome these conflicts as they come, as *probationary* ones.(p.1022)

Such exemplary patience as that with which Richardson endows her, is in accordance with the prescriptions of numerous Christian commentators. The words of Christ in The Imitation of Christ may be taken as an example of such recommendations, and might have been spoken directly to Clarissa, since they summon the disciple to sufferings which are remarkably similar to those which she is required to endure:

> Dispose not yourself to rest, but to patient endurance. Seek true peace not on earth, but in Heaven; not in man nor in any other creature, but in God alone. For love of God, cheerfully endure every thing – labour, sorrow, temptation, provocation, anxiety, necessity, weakness, injury and insult; censure, humiliation, disgrace, contradiction and contempt. All these things foster your growth in virtue, for they test the approved servant of Christ, and form the jewels of his heavenly crown. I will grant an eternal reward for your brief toil, and boundless glory for your passing trouble.(40)

It is the patience with which Clarissa submits to her trials that has a profound effect on those around her. Belford's admiration for such exemplary conduct completes his conversion, and in turn, through him, influences the lives of his fellow-rakes for the better, so that they, too, have a chance of achieving salvation. Untold good is shown to be thus performed by the power of God working through this dying girl, who has demonstrated the right to claim that she acts in 'humble imitation of the sublimest exemplar'(p.1118) in accepting suffering as God's will. Such a claim relates to the notion that suffering may be seen as the privilege of sharing in the Passion of Christ, and thereby earning the right to share in His glory. Clarissa's address to her Redeemer at the conclusion of her Will, demonstrates an awareness of the

meritorious aspect of her suffering in that it links the redemptive Passion of Christ with her own trials. By the one, mankind is redeemed; by the other, Clarissa believes that she has atoned for her sins, and may confidently hope to share her Saviour's glory:

> And now, oh my blessed REDEEMER, do I, with a lively faith, humbly lay hold of Thy meritorious death and sufferings; hoping to be washed clean in Thy precious blood from all my sins: in the bare hope of the happy consequences of which, how light do those sufferings seem (grievous as they were at the time) which I confidently trust will be a means, by Thy grace, to work out for me a more exceeding and eternal weight of glory![p.1420]

Her perception of suffering as a means of redemption marks her out as one who follows directly, as she has claimed, in the footsteps of the 'sublimest exemplar'. The doctrine of the redemptive nature of Christ's sufferings has a long history and is an integral part of Christian belief. Aquinas says:

> But since Christ's suffering was enough and much more than enough to make amends for both the sin and the liability to punishment of mankind, his sufferings were a kind of ransom by which we are delivered from both slaveries. Christ made amends not with money, but by the greatest gift of all, himself, given up for us.[41]

The link between the redemptive suffering of Christ and the suffering of His followers, which may, if endured in patience and submission, lead to glory, can be seen as well-established likewise in Protestant theology. Jeremy Taylor tells us that those who suffer must take Christ on the Cross as a model, reminding his readers that Christ endured more for us that we can endure for Him or for ourselves. Sufferers who grasp this find '*the high way of the Crosse* … is the way *to ease*, to a kingdom, and *to felicity*'.[42] Clarissa is brought to follow the 'high way of the Crosse' by accepting that her ordeal is the means by which her relationship with God is to be defined, and that her sufferings have been permitted for her eternal wellbeing. Because of this, she may cry out to God, but she does not cry out *against* Him. Her

response is that of the disciple in The Imitation of Christ who responds to his own suffering with the words, 'I have accepted the Cross from your own hands: as You laid it upon me, I have accepted it, and will bear it to death'.(43)

On the way to that death, Clarissa learns to know herself, as the sufferer who embraces his suffering in the spirit of acceptance and trust is promised that he will do. In the Collection, Richardson acknowledges this claim, 'How little do we know of ourselves till the hour of trial comes!'.(44) If the reader feels that Clarissa's insight falls short of a full understanding of her own motives, it can still be granted that her experiences have opened up for her the self-knowledge that has enabled her to repent of her hidden sins. Rosemary Bechler has drawn attention to the manner in which the ideas of the German Lutheran Mystic, Jacob Boehme, may be applied to the opposition of Lovelace and Clarissa. Boehme comments on the revelatory force of opposition in the development of the spiritual life, 'No thing may be revealed to itself without contrariety'.(45) It is largely through the opposition of Lovelace that Clarissa's trials have been defined, and that her development from a young girl of conventional piety to a woman of heroic virtue is achieved. She finds her 'contrariety' in him; her capacity to endure has met his capacity to test her endurance; her virtue has been tested against the touchstone of his vice. In her, the grace of God has been demonstrated and has triumphed over the negativity of pride and egotism. Lovelace himself recognizes that Clarissa's suffering has both defined and developed her character, that it has given her greater knowledge of herself – her 'self' – and has taught her adversary in his turn to perceive its quality. With characteristic acuity, and a failure to mention his own part

in creating the 'uncommon occasions' which have had so great an influence on Clarissa's development, Lovelace writes to Belford on the subject:

> How the dear creature's character rises in every line of thy letters! – But it is owing to the uncommon occasions she has met with that she blazes out upon us with such a meridian lustre! – How, but for these occasions, could her noble sentiments, her prudent consideration, her forgiving spirit, her exalted benevolence, and her equanimity in view of the most shocking prospects ... have been manifested?(p.1309)

Equally, Clarissa herself early perceives that in trial there might lie the means of self-knowledge, of an understanding of what is vital in the struggle for salvation, not the good opinion of others, but 'self acquittal'. The words she writes to Anna – 'To be *self*-acquitted is a blessing to be preferred to the opinion of all the world'(p.360) - express the Protestant view of the supremacy of the individual conscience, and in view of the fact that when she writes them, she has no knowledge of what trials, calling for both endurance and rigorous self-examination, await her, must be seen as prophetic. No-one can be self-acquitted without knowing that self, and to seek to know the self in Christian terms, is to risk knowing the faults and failings of that self as well as its virtues. Clarissa's progress to that self-knowledge, incomplete as it must be in a post-lapsarian world, seems to reflect Jeremy Taylor's opinion that to be tried is a proof of God's love, since otherwise we cannot know if we are good or bad.(46) If this is the case, that love may manifest itself by teaching a knowledge of the self that humbles the soul by trial. The revelation of hitherto unrecognized weaknesses might lead to despair, but it can also lead, with the help of grace, to a desire and purpose to amend and the suffering by which this knowledge has been gained may also serve as an opportunity to atone for sin and weakness.

Such lessons may involve humiliation, but this is not to be seen as a punishment inflicted for sin by an offended God, but a means by which He tests in

order to draw the soul to Himself, in order, ultimately, to exalt it. Clarissa early recognizes that humiliation may be an essential part of the nature of trial, but her expression of this notion has a certain poignancy, in retrospect, for the reader, since when she speaks of being humbled at this early point in the novel, she can have no conception of the depths of humiliation to come:

> My calamities have humbled me enough to make me turn my gaudy eye inward; to make me look into myself! – And what have I discovered there? Why, my dear friend, more *secret* pride and vanity than I could have thought had lain in my unexamined heart.(p.333)

Clarissa is unaware that she has not yet been humbled enough, and that the mere apprehension of pride and vanity is not sufficient for the purification which will eventually exalt her. She reaches that point when she can only express the totality of her humiliation by writing, not to her friend, but to *herself* in an attempt to give some form or shape to emotions which must be borne, but which are virtually unendurable. Clarissa's intellectual apprehension of the necessity of humiliation to achieve God's purposes has here been fused with the emotional experience of what humiliation is, and feels like; not only her mind but her heart understands:

> How art thou now humbled in the dust, thou proud Clarissa Harlowe! Thou that never steppedst out of thy father's house but to be admired! ... to plume thyself upon the expected applauses of all that beheld thee! ... Thou that usedst to go to rest satisfied with the adulations paid thee in the past day, and couldst put off everything but thy vanity! – (p.891)

If she is 'humbled in the dust' in her own eyes, she is no less humbled in the eyes of others, and knows it. In another of her 'papers', she addresses Arabella (whom the reader might judge to be in need of some salutary experience of humiliation herself), and writes, expressing her conviction that her fall has been permitted to teach her true, as opposed to false, humility:

> Rejoice not now, my Bella, my sister, my friend; but pity the humbled creature, whose foolish heart you used to say you beheld through the thin veil of humility, which covered it.
>
> It must have been so! My fall had not else been permitted – (p.891)

To greet Arabella as a friend is to recognize that she has been an unwitting instrument to warn Clarissa, vindictive and envious as the motives of her conduct were, of the pride that has undergone the correction of humiliation, since whatever offers to make the soul aware of its own fault does it a service. Moreover, Clarissa's humiliation, whether in her own eyes or in those of others, has the effect of bringing her closer to her 'sublimest Exemplar' in spirit. Jeremy Taylor tells us that one of the signs of humility is to behave as Christ behaved. The humble man, he says:

> Is ready to do good offices to the murderers of his fame, to his slanderers, backbiters and detractors, as Christ washed the feet of *Judas*.(47)

Clarissa lives up to this definition, being ready to do all in her power to prevent her family's vengeance on Lovelace, or his on James. She prays for the soul's welfare of the man who has been the murderer of her fame, and is likewise, as Jeremy Taylor further remarks of the humble man 'contented to be suspected of Indiscretion, so, before God he may be really innocent'.(48) Her reputation lost, rejected by her family, and unjustly condemned by a society which has no place for a woman thus injured, calumniated by such as the hypocritical Mr. Brand – whose self-righteous comments illustrate painfully what a woman in her position could expect from respectable society at large – Clarissa's acknowledgement of her own innocence and her self-acquittal is as much a demonstration of her humility as the acceptance of the state to which her unmerited sufferings have brought her. Humility is not self-abasement, but a clear-sighted self-evaluation. If her state in this life is that of an outcast in the eyes of society, she knows that it is otherwise in the eyes of God, and

that it is by her trials that He intends her exaltation. That Richardson, as well as God, had this intention may be inferred from a letter to Hester Mulso:

> I laid indeed an heavy hand on the good Clarissa. But I had begun with her, with a view to the future saint in her character: and could she, but by sufferings, shine as she does?(49)

Christian theology frequently presents the view that it is not the time of suffering which represents the greatest spiritual danger to the soul, but the time of prosperity. St. John of the Cross asserts that we can acquire neither humility nor self-knowledge in times of prosperity and are therefore more liable to sin. Spiritual humility is drawn from the aridity of the night of the soul. 'Through this humility, which is acquired by the said knowledge of self, the soul is purged from all those imperfections whereinto it fell with respect to that sin of pride, in the time of its prosperity.'(50) Likewise, the peril to which the soul is exposed during periods of prosperity, when it may be drawn away from the things of God, and the opposing benefits of suffering are succinctly expressed in William Law's enquiry, 'How many saints has adversity sent to Heaven? And how many poor sinners has prosperity plunged into everlasting misery?'.(51)

At the end of her life, the forcing-house of suffering has made Clarissa conscious of the dangers of prosperity. Born with all the advantages that wealth, status and personal attractions could offer, she might have been expected to cry out against the loss of every worldly gratification and at the prospect of an early death. Yet she writes to her father as she lies dying, rejoicing in the loss of these advantages:

> Since, had I escaped the snares by which I was entangled, I might have wanted those exercises which I now look upon as so many mercies dispensed to wean me betimes from a world that presented itself to me with prospects too alluring: and, in that case (too easily satisfied with *worldly* felicity) I might not have attained to that

> blessedness which now ... I humbly presume (through the Divine goodness) I am rejoicing in.(p.1372)

Both in Richardson's own circle and in Christian thought in general, the belief that in adversity lies the supreme opportunity for the testing of the soul, so that it may gain merit and prove itself worthy of exaltation, appears to be well-established. Likewise the belief that there are no comparable opportunities in prosperity and ease accompanies this conviction in both spheres. Stinstra makes this point in his Preface to the Seventh and Eighth Volumes of Clarissa:

> The less one thinks that temporal happiness and prosperity are the definite fate and part of virtue, the less one is disappointed to learn that, on the contrary, one must often struggle with cruel disasters and long-lasting adversities. One observes that this life is not immediately rewarding, but is, instead, a trial and preparation for another life in which the pious will receive the real reward for their good works.(52)

Since this is the case, adversity and suffering are to be welcomed. To reinforce this point, Richardson ensures that Clarissa is not the only person in her own circle who comes to recognize the benefits of trial over those of prosperity. Anna too reflects on the rewards that Clarissa may expect in undergoing her trials in patience. Her remarks – which voice similar sentiments to those of a number of Christian thinkers – suggest the notion that by adversity's offering such especial opportunities to the sufferer, it acts as the forge in which the soul is refined and purified, as gold is by the fire:

> *Adversity is your shining time.* I see evidently that it must call forth graces and beauties that could not have been seen in a run of that prosperous fortune which attended you from your cradle till now. (p.579)

Had Anna written these remarks having just laid down a volume of Edward Young's Night Thoughts, she could hardly have expressed herself in terms closer to those of Richardson's contemporary and friend:

A noble fortitude in ills; delights
Heaven, earth, ourselves; 'tis duty, glory, peace.
Affliction is the good man's shining scene;
Prosperity conceals his brightest ray.(53)

If it cannot be claimed that Richardson necessarily drew this thought from the writings of his friend, it can be claimed that he shared the sentiment, and that both authors had tapped into a common mode of expression for Christian writers who wished to point out both the benefits of trial in calling forth and testing virtue, and the dangers of prosperity.(54)

Richardson's treatment of the complex issue of trial embraces one further important aspect, that of purification by affliction, which is closely linked to the Christian metaphor of refinement by fire. In a letter to Lady Bradshaigh, he refers to his heroine as 'a Creature perfected by Sufferings and already ripened for Glory'.(55) In Clarissa he has Mrs. Norton refer directly to Clarissa's own purification in this manner as designed to achieve her exaltation.(p.980) These two aspects of suffering, purification and exaltation, are closely linked in the novel, and elsewhere in Christian thought; one is hardly possible without the other. Clarissa is exposed to a specific form of trial, that which echoes the primal opposition in Judaeo-Christian theology of man to Satan, of human free-will, assisted by grace, opposed to seductive and devious evil, of the positive values of charity in the love of God and true self-love, opposed to the negativity of false egoism and pride, of what is essentially reasonable according to God's order, opposed to moral chaos. One Christian thinker, Milton, expresses the values of such opposition succinctly in his remark 'That which purifies us is triall, and triall by what is contrary'.(56)

Christian theology holds that in some form all men must re-enact that ancient conflict. Yet some souls are invited to more exacting and arduous trials than the

common run of humanity. St. John of the Cross speaks of the trials of the spirit which are reserved for those souls whom God intends to admit to closer union with Himself. 'Those who have the disposition and greater strength to suffer, He purges with greater intensity and more quickly.'(57)

We are reminded that Clarissa's trials against so skilful and powerful an adversary do not outlast a year's duration. However, the intensity of her suffering more than outweighs its comparative brevity. The process of purification demands a recognition of sinfulness, followed by repentance and expiation before the sufferer is rewarded by a union in love with God. St. John of the Cross compares the effect of this spiritual purgation to the effects of a fire-consuming fuel. During the course of purgation, the soul which is being consumed in the purifying fire becomes aware of what it never has perceived in itself before, its own impurities, and it comes to look upon itself as loathsome, although it is not worse in itself, nor worse in the eyes of God, than before it was granted this insight. This appears to be Clarissa's experience of purification under trial, since it is only then that she can, in the anguish of her self-interrogations after the rape, fully experience the sense that she has hidden sins to expiate; she has become aware of the true and deadening effects on the soul of sin.

It is useless for the reader to respond that Clarissa's self-accusations are too severe, since St. John of the Cross asserts that a revulsion from one's own sins is a necessary part of the purgation which the soul must undergo before it may achieve the desired union with God:

> For this Divine purgation is removing all the evil and vicious humours which the soul has never perceived because they have been so deeply rooted and grounded in it; it has never realized, in fact, that it had so much evil within itself. But now that they are to be driven forth and annihilated, these humours reveal themselves, and become visible to the soul ... and, as it sees in itself that which it saw not before, it is clear to it that it is not only unfit for God to see it, but that it deserves His abhorrence and that He does indeed abhor it.(58)

Clarissa's afflictions follow the classic Christian patterns of testing, self-revelation, expiation and purification. After this final stage of trial is completed, she may confidently expect the promised reward of those who triumphantly stand their testing with patience and humility. Her confidence in this expectation is expressed in two of the letters written while she is dying. One to Anna, refers to herself as 'purified by her sufferings, and … made as she assuredly trusts, by God's goodness, eternally happy'.(p.1377) In the other, she writes to Arabella, her sometime critic and persecutor, that she is 'NOW made perfect … through sufferings'.(p.1375) Clarissa's perception of the value and result of her sufferings is reflected in the general conviction of her friends that her conduct under trials so extreme has manifested the purposes of God in permitting such suffering, which offers to the faithful soul the opportunity of a glorious reward. Mrs. Norton writes in her penultimate letter to her charge of the glory that Christian hope holds out for those who endure such trials:

> You are as near perfection, by all that I have heard, as any creature in this world can be: for here is your glory; you are brightened and purified, as I may say, by your sufferings!(p.1328)

If the prayer with which Mrs. Norton ends the letter, that Clarissa may be spared if it is God's will, is not to be answered to her own satisfaction, there can be no doubt that for Clarissa herself the outcome of her trials is that which is most to be desired. She can reflect on sufferings now past and on glory to come, and find herself both afflicted and blest:

> Most happy has been my punishment here! – happy indeed! … *It is good for me that I was afflicted!*(pp.1361-1362)

7

'That False Fruit'

IF Richardson's novel reflects the eighteenth-century interest in the problem of evil,[1] and in the further problem as to how to reconcile unmerited or apparently arbitrary suffering with the providential designs of a just God, it also addresses the existence of evil in its specific form of sin and vice. Richardson's treatment of specific sins, and his examination of their effects, reflects the orthodox Christian view that all sin is essentially unreasonable in that it opposes the eternal law. Leaving aside the materialism of the Harlowes, the effects of which he demonstrates with such clarity and perception through his analysis of its effects both on the Harlowes' own moral characters and on the fate of Clarissa, he chooses to explore most fully the sins of lust, pride and violence, which in the case of Lovelace, although he is not the only sinner in these respects, are closely linked.

Richardson himself characterizes Lovelace in a letter to Aaron Hill as a 'vile libertine',[2] but his anti-hero's complex character shows that he is very far removed from being a mere sensualist. However, it is clear that his sexuality is damaged in a specific way, and that the nature of the damage reflects, in its own manner, the wound which Christian theology, of every persuasion, believes to have been inflicted on human sexuality in general as a direct result of the fall of man. From the moment when man severed his relationship with God by a deliberate choice of sin, he lost the perfect control of his passions with which a previously integrated nature had endowed him. The point is made by St. Augustine, by Aquinas, and by Calvin, in turn, in their several discussions of the matter,[3] but for Richardson more directly

illuminating on this point might well have been the words of John Milton. Milton asserts that before the fall, that cataclysmic event, Adam and Eve, naked and innocent, were not only without shame but were without even the knowledge of what shame is. Immediately following the fall, the effects of the disintegration of human nature are seen in the disorder of the sexuality of that first pair; desire is now no longer subject to reason:

> But that false fruit
> For other operations first displayed,
> Carnal desire inflaming; he on Eve
> Began to cast lascivious eyes; she him
> As wantonly repaid; in lust they burn,
> Till Adam thus 'gan Eve to dalliance move.(4)

Such disordered desire is opposed to the purity characteristic of that integrated state which they have now forever lost. The Angel Raphael, who had once instructed Adam on the use of his judgement, had urged him to love Eve rationally, and the description he gave of such rational love offers a contrast to the spectacle of disordered desire Adam and Eve present after the fall:

> In loving thou dost well; in passion not,
> Wherein true love consists not. Love refines
> The thoughts, and heart enlarges – hath his seat
> In Reason, and is judicious, is the scale
> By which to heavenly love thou may'st ascend,
> Not sunk in carnal pleasure; for which cause
> Among the beasts no mate for thee was found.(5)

Raphael's words give the physical expression of love its due, but not a pre-eminent place; love which is subject to reason is seen to approach most closely to the love shared by God and the angels. As such its practice elevates man, while mere carnal intercourse sinks him to the level of the unreasoning beasts. It is to this level that Milton shows Adam and Eve descending after the fall, when they have lost forever, both for themselves and for their descendants, the perfect innocence of a state in which reason rules the passions. Then, Adam speaks of Eve's beauty as

inflaming his sense,[6] an indication that his integrated nature, as created by God, has undergone a transformation; desire has degenerated from the reasoned response which God intended to exist between man and woman.

Milton's view of the origin of lust – lust as opposed to the pure, controlled desire characteristic of an integrated nature now irreparably lost – is not peculiar to himself among Christian thinkers. When St. Augustine discusses the Platonist assertion that anger and lust are 'perverted elements in a man's character and soul', he adds:

> But in paradise before man's sin these elements did not exist in their perverted state. For then they were not set in motion, in defiance of a right will, to pursue any course which made it necessary to hold them back with the guiding reins, so to speak, of reason.[7]

He points out that the other members of the body are set in motion by the will, but the genital organs alone are completely under the sway of the passions, hence the shame attending their operation, and the necessity for acts of generation, even lawfully performed in marriage, to be modestly concealed. If he does not go as far as Milton does in asserting that Adam and Eve had physically consummated their love according to God's original dispensation before the fall, he does claim that if they had not been cast out of paradise before they could do so, that sexual union would have been a consummation without shame, 'the peaceful obedience of the members in intercourse, not the shameful concupiscence of the flesh'.[8] He argues that subjection to lust is part of man's punishment for his disobedience, and that therefore, human nature is rightfully ashamed of lust itself:

> For in its disobedience, which subjected the sexual organs solely to its own impulses and snatched them from the will's authority, we see a proof of the retribution imposed on man for that first disobedience. And it was entirely fitting that retribution should show itself in that part which effects the procreation of the very nature that was changed for the worse through that first great sin.[9]

A distinction is thus made between pre- and post-lapsarian sexuality which subsequent theologians endorse. Pre-Reformation theologians hold that even within the bonds of marriage the exercise of the sexual function might still involve sin. Aquinas admits that the 'use of sex properly ordered for its purpose of human reproduction is no sin',(10) but adds:

> Sexual sin consists rather in a breakdown in proper reasonable order in exercising the sex-act, and that can happen in several ways.(11)

One such way is promiscuity, which Aquinas finds contrary to human nature in that it denies the primary purpose for which human sexuality had been created, the procreation and care of children, a denial which constitutes a fatal sin.

Richardson's treatment of sexuality reflects the tradition of Christian thinking on the matter in that he shows the damage done to this function by the fall of man. The conduct of the rakes, the irregular unions contracted by some of his characters, the very existence of Mrs. Sinclair and her 'daughters', the lustful pursuit of the innocent, and above all, Lovelace's distortion of sexuality by making it a function of his egoism, all give expression to the wound in post-lapsarian sexuality. Richardson does not subscribe in general to the severity of those pre-Reformation theologians with regard to the dangers of disordered sexuality within marriage, but, through the apprehensions of his heroine, he does suggest that such unions as those proposed to her, with Solmes and Lovelace respectively, would have had their own spiritual dangers; the reader may infer that Solmes might have used the marriage-bed as an exercise in fear, and Lovelace as an exercise in power.

In contrast, the chaste Sir Charles Grandison enjoys with Harriet a happy union which, in its mutual expression of affection, friendship and respect, suggests an ideal of pure marital harmony without any sign of the guilt which pre-Reformation

theology attaches to sexuality, even within the bonds of marriage, beyond the purposes of procreation. Such a union might have been one which Clarissa would characterize as 'a state of purity'. However, happy marital relationships are always shown as existing within the context of charity, and as fruitful, so pointing to the Christian conviction of procreation as the primary purpose of marriage. It must be assumed therefore, that Richardson expects the sexual function in marriage to find its place within that wider context, and that its expression is legitimated and sanctified because it is exercised in accordance with reason. It follows that he regards those unions which are irregular and lack the formal commitment of marriage, or which would be characterized by a distorted form of sexuality, such as Clarissa's proposed matches with Solmes and Lovelace, as intrinsically wrong because they oppose reason.

If Richardson does no more than hint at the manner in which sexuality may be distorted within marriage, he gives greater attention to the spiritual dangers of irregular unions, both in Clarissa and in his other novels. The portrayal of irregular relationships in his work demonstrates the temporal misery and disgrace of such unions, and reminds the reader that they compromise the eternal welfare of those who enter into them. In Clarissa the squalor and wretchedness of Belton's irregular union with Thomasine is underlined by his nearness to death; his consciousness of sin is exacerbated by the callous treatment he receives from his mistress, and even from the children he has hitherto believed to be his own. Richardson is at pains to present the orthodox Christian view of such unions, by demonstrating their insecurities both for the partners and for their offspring. The comment of Aquinas is one which Richardson surely would have endorsed. Discussing the dangers represented by promiscuity, Aquinas goes on:

> The exercise of the sex act outside marriage is promiscuous and disadvantageous to the care of children, and for this reason a fatal sin. It doesn't matter that sometimes people who act this way do provide sufficiently for the consequent offspring of their actions: laws are laid down to cover the general sum of things, not particular cases. One act of intercourse can beget a child, so any disorder in that act which disadvantages a child that could be born of it is a fatal disorder as such, quite apart from any disordered desire.(12)

Belton does not have the security of knowing that his children by Thomasine are, in fact, his own, and is no longer well enough to assert any dubious authority that he might have had over his mistress and her children. On the other hand, a woman in Thomasine's position may be left, on the death of her protector, to fend for herself and for her children in a world in which she is regarded with contempt as an outcast, and in which her children can claim no legitimate right to their father's name and estate. Belford's description of his friend's last days conveys the horror of such a situation and concludes with the words 'The fruits of blessed keeping these!'(p.1089)

Belton does not have the authority of a husband; Thomasine does not have the security of a wife. That she claims to be 'Mrs. Belton' may suggest her awareness that once her lover is dead, she has no legal claim to whatever may be left of his estate. Predatory though she is, and unfaithful to her protector, her own position is no more enviable than that of Belton himself. Richardson is even-handed in his presentation of the mutual wounds the partners in such situations inflict on each other. It may be inferred that Belford speaks for him:

> Hardly ever, I dare say, was there a keeper that did not make a keeperess; who lavished away on her kept-fellow what she obtained from the extravagant folly of him who kept her.(p.1089)

St. Augustine, discussing his own experience of living in a state of concubinage, and reflecting on 'the difference between the restraint of the marriage alliance, contracted for the purpose of having children', and 'a bargain struck for lust',(13) records his grief and sense of loss when he sends his mistress away. This,

together with his fidelity, may suggest that his liaison was not solely 'a bargain struck for lust'. In this, it would differ from the irregular liaisons which Richardson portrays, which appear to be, for the most part, based on commercialism, whether children are born of these unions or not. Likewise, Lovelace's fantasy of a Clarissa, subdued and devoted, nursing twin boys, may be less a projection of a happy family life than a dream of the completion of his triumph, and his children of such a union loved not necessarily for themselves, as St. Augustine had admitted that children of irregular unions may be, so much as primarily the visible expression of the completeness of his victory over Clarissa's will and heart.(p.706)

Lovelace does not appear to have contemplated entering into a state of concubinage with any other woman, but leads a band of men, who, apart from Belton's liaison with Thomasine, engage in endless promiscuity. The ethos of the rakes and their familiarity with the world of the brothel is the background and counterpoise to the commercialism of the patriarchal marriage system. In both the brothel and in respectable society, women's bodies are exchanged for money. Richardson's Preface to Clarissa warns his readers about 'that dangerous but too commonly received notion, *that a reformed rake makes the best husband*', but equally his novel implicitly criticizes the notion of property-marriage.

The reader may certainly expect that at least one of his rakes, Belford, having reformed, will make a good and faithful husband. Lovelace, however, lives and dies as rake. He and his followers exhibit the same free-living conduct, but are widely diverse in character and motive. Richardson's presentation of Mowbray, for example, suggests a man who is so lacking in intelligence and sensitivity that he would seek nothing more from a partner but the satisfaction of mere animal lust divorced from any other consideration, and who might regard a woman as nothing

more than the means of his own physical gratification. He represents one extreme of sexual irregularity. At the other extreme, for Lovelace consummation is almost incidental to the intellectual pleasures of intrigue and deceit. Both display in their respective ways a disordered sense of the uses of sexuality, and at the same time, carry patriarchal convictions of the inferiority of women to the point of parody; to both of them women count so little that they may be used and abused at their pleasure. To Mowbray indeed, there is hardly any distinction between one woman and another. No other character in Clarissa expresses quite so complete a divorce of sex from any hint of sensibility as does Mowbray, but that is not to say that the behaviour of his fellow-rakes is to be perceived as being in any way less reprehensible.

Richardson takes for granted the reader's inference that such men take their pleasure where persuasion, money, or a degree of force will procure it for them, but such activities are never explicitly described in the novel. However, the world of the rakes, where sexual freedom, unfettered by any eternal considerations, is the norm, is suggested by the familiarity of Lovelace and his followers with Mrs. Sinclair and her 'daughters', and with women of a higher class in their profession, who may pass as genteel enough to deceive Clarissa into believing them to be Lovelace's aunt and cousin. Lovelace and Belford, in his unregenerate days, received in polite society, are also habitués of this other world, a fact that the reformed Belford reflects upon when he considers the sordid viciousness of the rake's existence:

> What woman, nice in her person and of purity in her mind and manners, did she know what miry wallowers the generality of men of our class are in themselves and constantly trough and sty with, but would detest the thoughts of associating with such filthy sensualists whose favourite taste carries them to mingle with the dregs of stews, brothels, and common-sewers?(p.1393)

Such lives as those led by the rakes, Richardson is at pains to suggest, perpetuate themselves and their evils by means of a gradual hardening of the spirit, which makes repentance difficult, if not impossible, and moreover, involves others in their own general ruin. Those men who live a rake's life not only risk their eternal welfare, but may be constrained to risk their temporal existence in duels, or to kill others who seek to avenge the lost honour of their female relatives. Clarissa comes to regard herself, as a result of her bitter experiences, as a warning to those women who hope to reform libertines by marriage, and to know what evils such associations bring:

> May my story be a warning to all, how they prefer a libertine to a man of true honour; and how they permit themselves to be misled (where they mean the *best*) by the specious yet foolish hope of subduing riveted habits, and as I may say of altering natures! – The *more* foolish, as experience might convince us, that there is hardly one in ten of even tolerably happy marriages, in which the wife keeps a hold in the *husband's* affections which she had in the *lover's*. What influence then can she hope to have over the morals of an avowed libertine, who marries perhaps for conveniency, who despises the tie, and whom, it is too probable, nothing but old age, or sickness, or disease (the consequence of ruinous riot) can reclaim?(p.1319)

The conduct of such men does not escape the notice of the religious commentators of Richardson's day. The remarks of William Law have a particular relevance to the condition of Lovelace himself, since the latter is not a philosophical atheist whose free-living is a proclamation of his rejection of Christian doctrine. Law reminds such men as Lovelace that if they accept the existence of God, and of a hereafter, reason dictates that they should therefore reform their behaviour:

> Let them but grant that there is a God and providence, and then they have granted enough to justify the wisdom and support the honor of devotion ... A devout man makes a true use of his reason; he sees through the vanity of the world, discovers the corruption of his nature and the blindness of his passions.(14)

Lovelace however, and - if the conclusions which are reached above by Clarissa are to be accepted as valid - the generality of rakes, never reach that state of reason. Only Belford grasps the essential irrationality of the rake's existence. Shaken by the spectacle of the dying Belton's condition, he offers to Lovelace the reflection that libertinism can bring only suffering, and concludes that he intends 'to live a life of reason, rather than a life of a brute, for the time to come'.(15) He has realized that the life of a rake is ultimately unsatisfying in this world, and compromises his salvation in the next. Christian theology would conclude that such dissatisfaction arises because such a life is opposed to man's essentially reasonable nature:

> It is, after all, a devilish life we have lived. And to consider how it all ends in a very few years: to see what a state of health this poor fellow is so soon reduced to: and then to observe how every one of ye run away from the unhappy being, as rats from a falling house, is fine comfort to help a man look back upon companions ill-chosen, and a life misspent.(p.1090)

It appears that Richardson supports the view that, on the whole, men are the predators in sexual irregularity and initiate woman by seduction, then despise them for having been seduced. Even Belford, in the course of reformation, is shown to be repelled by the women of Mrs. Sinclair's house, as they gather to surround her deathbed. His description of the scene shows both the spurious nature of their charms and in the sordid spectacle of the grotesque Mrs. Sinclair herself, to what fate such women must come, once age, disease and the ravages of their profession have marked them. Belford equates the sluttishness of their persons with the degradation and impurity of their spiritual condition, but it is not clear whether Richardson intends the reader to make the same identification; elsewhere, through Anna, he seems to offer a comment which stands as a partial corrective, at least, to the age-old view, expressed in the Old Testament,(16) that such women exert their wiles to ruin

men. Anna's letter to Belford, commenting on Lovelace' execration of Mrs. Sinclair, is balanced between revulsion from the prostitutes' trade, and a clear-sighted appreciation of the part played by such men as Lovelace and the rakes in introducing them to such a life by their own free-living ways:

> By the letter of the wicked man it is apparent that there are still wickeder women. But see what a guilty commerce with the devils of your own sex will bring those to, whose morals ye have ruined! – for these women were once innocent: it was *man* that made them otherwise. The first bad man, perhaps, threw them upon worse men: those upon still worse: till they commenced devils incarnate - (p.1454)

Anna blames the men who take advantage of female innocence, but she finds the sinners of both sexes equally reprehensible; they are both 'devils'. Moreover, in the third edition, she acknowledges the attractions that such men as Lovelace can have. 'These are the very fellows that we women do not naturally hate'.(ii, p.318) Richardson does not privilege the women sinners above the men; he concurs with Jeremy Taylor's view that both partners to the sin of fornication are guilty of offending God, and that the sin is damnable,(17) but equally, he is as clear-sighted as Anna is shown to be, in his analysis of how such women come to such a state of degradation.

The language he gives to Belford to describe the women of Mrs. Sinclair's house, with its references to Swift's Yahoos, and to Virgil's 'obscene Harpies squirting their ordure upon the Trojan trenchers', together with Belford's judgement that their persons are 'as filthy as their minds', as he urges Lovelace to 'hate them as much as I do', certainly echoes, as Jocelyn Harris has pointed out, a kind of misogynistic strain similar to that of Swift's The Lady's Dressing Table, or of A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed.(18) However, the reader of Belford's description is surely meant to contrast this hellish scene, with its grotesque dying sinner surrounded by her corrupted retinue, with the pure serenity of another

deathbed, Clarissa's. A point is being made about the contrast between sexual viciousness and sexual purity. Moreover, Belford for the first time sees the women unprepared for those who frequent them, at the moment when his eyes are being opened in another sense; his revelation of the spurious nature of their charms comes in the midst of his own conversion from being one such frequenter. His revulsion therefore is psychologically valid, even in failing to mention – or to perceive – the part played by men in the moral condition of these women:

> But these were the veterans, the chosen band; for now and then flitted in, to the number of half a dozen or more, by turns, subordinate sinners, undergraduates, younger than some of the chosen phalanx, but not less obscene in their appearance, though indeed not so much beholden to the plastering fucus; yet unpropped by stays, squalid, loose in attire, sluggish-haired, under-petticoated only as the former, eyes half opened, winking and pinking, mispatched, yawning, stretching, as if from the unworn-off effects of the midnight revel.(p.1388)

There could be no greater contrast with the shining cleanliness and seemliness of Clarissa herself, whose purity lights up her own squalid prison. Belford appears conveniently to forget, while the reader may remember, when he expresses his revulsion and disgust, that such women are professionals, providing a service for which innumerable members of his own sex are only too ready to pay, and that he is only present at this deathbed because he is himself familiar with the world which they represent and embody.

Richardson may present Mrs. Sinclair's 'daughters' as degraded and repulsive, but elsewhere, in Anna's remarks quoted above, he suggests that such women, once ruined, are constrained to their profession by necessity, not lust, while the men who use them can be motivated by nothing else. The histories of Polly and Sally, Mrs. Sinclair's able lieutenants, as former trophies of Lovelace's own lust for conquest, then discarded, might suggest why some such women come to serve in

such establishments, as the expanded Conclusion to the third edition makes painfully clear in the detailed history of their decline.[iv, pp.536-547] Yielding to persuasion, importunity, or even initially to the desires of the flesh, in response to the attractions of Lovelace or of some similar seducer, may legitimately be considered sinful in itself, but so are the activities of those who initiate and partner them. Belford's revulsion does not here extend to their original initiators, nor to their present customers, but at least one religious commentator, Milton, would argue that the sin of the male is greater, given his closer approximation to the image of God.[19]

The history of contempt for such women is well-established. The New Testament makes it clear that they are generally to be despised.[20] However, St. Paul points out that the man who uses a prostitute becomes as one with her, so acknowledging that the frequenter is as much a sinner as the frequented (1 Cor. 5.16). Christianity enjoins chastity on both sexes, but historically men have been accorded greater latitude, and, in practice, the society of Richardson's day reserves the severity of its censure for women who put themselves outside social and moral codes rather than for the men who drive them to do so. At least one divine of Richardson's own time acknowledged the inequality of this situation. Dr. Dodd's sermon, preached before the officers of the Magdalen Hospital in 1759 has this to say:

> For though the great author of our being hath, for wise and good ends, implanted the same passions in either sex, and therefore transgression is as possible, and of consequence as excusable on the weaker side, as it is in the stronger; yet fact abundantly demonstrates to us, that men, for the most part, are the seducers; and the generality of those, who now claim our aid have been introduced to their misery by the complicated arts of seduction, and by every unjustifiable method, which cruel and brutish lust suggest to the crafty seducer.[21]

Dr. Dodd goes on to point out that 'one false step forever ruins their fair fame', while their seducers are not even subject to reproach. Since Richardson is known to have been sympathetic to women in such a situation, and in 1760 actually

became one of the annual Governors of the Magdalen House, it is not too much to infer that he would concur with Dr. Dodd's remarks.(22) However, he accepts the existence of the double standard as a fact, if a deplorable one. Lovelace may be notorious, but he is not excluded from popular assemblies. His presence at Colonel Ambrose's ball, after his conduct towards Clarissa has become known, and the worst of it at least suspected, if not confirmed, excites comment, but not condemnation, still less eviction. Shameless as he is, he carries off the situation with unblushing confidence. Anna comments that 'he had something in his specious manner to say to everybody: and this soon too quieted the disgust each person had at his entrance'.(p.1134) It is clear that Clarissa – or any other woman in her situation – could not have contemplated entering such an assembly, and society would never have contemplated allowing her to do so.(23)

Of Richardson's male characters, the reader may be sure that only Sir Charles, and probably Mr. Hickman, of whom Clarissa approves, place the same value on chastity in men as society places on that of women. It is well known that Colley Cibber found the proposition that the hero of Richardson's last book should be a male virgin a matter of hilarity,(24) much to the author's discomfort, and likewise, Lovelace's contempt for Hickman is partially based on the latter's sexual purity.(p.1096) The responses of both Cibber and Lovelace offer a comment on the double standard of behaviour which contemporary society tacitly accepted. Philosophers of the time might locate the insistence on female chastity alone in social utility, or in the need to ensure a legitimate descent of property; modern commentators might conclude that it expressed the male right in women *as* property, a right which patriarchy had annexed to itself.(25) Richardson however, explores the situation of inequality as it existed, and argues, at least implicitly, for its injustice.

Equally present, and equally implicit, is his Christian perspective. In a number of ways, he points out the essential illogicality of the double standard. Morden, for example, admits that he would have 'thought myself warranted to cut the throat of any young fellow' who served his female relatives as he served the sisters or daughters of others.(p.1280) Clarissa herself echoes his remarks to censure sentiments almost exactly similar,(p.1319) and the reformed Belford, if further reinforcement of Richardson's rejection of the double standard were needed, offers it when he remarks on the contrast between the rakes' behaviour and their claims to be men of honour:

> *Man* acting thus by *man*, we should not be at a loss to give such actions a name: but is it not doubly and trebly aggravated when such advantage is taken of an inexperienced and innocent young creature whom we pretend to love above all the women in the world, and when we seal our pretences with the most solemn vows and protestations of inviolable honour that we can invent?(p.1295)

In the third edition, Belford censures himself for the false notions of honour in keeping Lovelace's confidence, and so failing to do all in his power to save Clarissa from his friend's designs.(iv, p.458) The tacit acceptance of the double standard, as Richardson suggests by such remarks, disfigures relationships between the sexes with dishonesty and cynicism; it certainly does not suggest the original paradisal harmony established when God declared that it was not good for man to be alone. Such men as Belford describes above, with their implicit contempt for the women they seduce, find their counterpart in the advice offered by Lord Chesterfield to his son, a lesson in dealing with women:

> He who flatters them most, pleases them best; and they are most in love with him, whom they think most in love with them. No adulation is too strong for them; no assiduity too great; no simulation of passion too gross.(26)

It might be remembered that his Lordship was instructing his son in the ways in which a gentleman might make his way in society. In both instances, the fictional

and the factual, the behaviour of the men involved is at once a comment on a false conception of honour, and revelatory of a total lack of understanding of the meaning of charity. Richardson's response to such attitudes which privilege men and condemn women in so unjust a manner, is to advance an alternative mode of conduct, based on Christian principles. He does not explicitly do so in Clarissa, but in the presentation of Sir Charles, who has all the address of the most polished of gentlemen, but who recognizes that the Christian injunction to chastity applies to both sexes.(V.643) In Clarissa, no male figure is seen to engage the reader's interest by his struggle to maintain sexual purity. Richardson's heroine stands opposed to a male world in which seduction is the norm.

Richardson's presentation of female sexuality is conditioned both by his avowed intention to base his novels upon the Christian system, and by the social expectations of the day as to female behaviour. It has frequently been remarked that the age expected women of 'respectable' character to conduct themselves not only with a total subscription to the view that female honour is located solely in chastity, but also as if they were totally devoid of any sexual feelings at all.(27) None of Richardson's main female characters, except perhaps Olivia, exhibit a frank interest in the satisfactions of the flesh. Yet he is too realistic to ignore the fact that women *are* seduced, and *do* respond to fine words, or to a fine person, or both.

The cases of Richardson's virtuous heroines are, however, problematic. Pamela resists the attentions of Mr. B. by calling on the help of grace, but the reader must be aware of the attraction, even if Pamela herself is not, which would provide the only answer to her ingenuous question as to why she cannot hate her would-be

seducer. Clarissa too, never acknowledges – and never seems to recognize – that within herself there is any desire for the satisfactions of the flesh. This is a denial which Anna recognises as self-deception, a denial of a response, which, while it must be controlled by reason, is implanted, as Dr. Dodd points out above, in humanity for God's own purpose.

Clarissa's apparent inability to recognize that such a response to Lovelace exists within her, and her claim that it *could* only exist were he a moral man, meanwhile admitting to only 'a conditional kind of liking' for him,(p.135) reveals a refusal to examine her own heart in this important respect. Anna echoes her friend's words, 'Indeed, I would not be *in love* with him, as it is called, for all the world',(p.72) with gentle and affectionate raillery. She acknowledges, as Clarissa declines to do, that attraction is not a matter of choice and does not depend upon the moral worthiness of the object. That Clarissa is attracted to Lovelace's person, even while she censures his moral character, is indicated in a number of subtle ways, and not least demonstrated by her response to another suitor. Mr. Solmes is as morally repulsive to her as Lovelace is, although his moral deficiencies take another form than that of sexual promiscuity, but no reader can doubt, reading Clarissa's comments about him, that she is not without a susceptibility to male beauty, in that her descriptions of Solmes make clear the opposite effect that physical repulsiveness has upon her.

Clarissa might consider what it is about Lovelace that she would prefer, but for his moral character, and why she so innocently remarks that no disguise could hide 'the gracefulness of his figure'.(p.352) By the time that Anna writes her account of her dead friend's virtues and accomplishments for Belford, she appears to have forgotten her scepticism as to the nature of Clarissa's response to Lovelace. Anna

praises her friend for her frankness in relation to her feelings about him, but the reader may have reservations about Anna's own frankness at this point, given her earlier opinion as to the degree of Clarissa's self-deception in the past. She tells Belford:

> You must everywhere insist upon it, that had it not been for the stupid persecutions of her relations, she would never have been in the power of this horrid profligate: and yet she was frank enough to acknowledge that were *person*, and *address*, and *alliance*, to be allowably the *principal* attractives, it would not have been difficult for her eye to mislead her heart.(p.1467)

The reader may feel that if Clarissa had been allowed, both by her society and by her education, to be frank with herself, she might have been better equipped to avoid Lovelace's guile as well as his attractions. Such frankness would not have compromised purity nor constituted such a danger as self-deception. Anna discreetly slides over any suggestion that if person and address were not allowable as '*principal* attractives', they were still attractives in themselves. It is an open question how far Clarissa's eye does, initially, mislead her heart. Certainly the well-experienced Lovelace can conclude complacently after his feigned illness, 'I see the dear soul loves me',(p.677) and Clarissa can write of this episode that it has taught her 'more than I knew of myself', and fear that 'I have, I doubt, exposed myself to him'.(p.679)

The natural attraction between the sexes is not a matter in which the will has a choice, but Clarissa behaves as if it is. The will can only operate to exercise choice as to whether to confine the expression of that attraction within legitimate bonds, or to indulge it freely. What Clarissa cannot admit to herself, when she declares that she could have loved Lovelace, is that she *did* love him, and that physical attraction was a powerful element of that love. In the third edition, Richardson has Clarissa express her conviction that love should be determined by the worthiness of the object,(ii, p.225) although some further remarks of hers to the same effect do add the proviso 'as much

as human frailty and partiality will permit'.[ii, p.438] In doing so, his intention might be to elevate his heroine but the reader is more likely to see such remarks as a reflection of some confusion on her part. Anna Howe appears to recognize in Clarissa's claim to feel only 'a conditional kind of liking' for Lovelace that the imposition of conditions is the province of reason, while the impulse towards liking – or attraction – finds its origin in the passions. Clarissa, too, is subject to the imperfections of humanity engendered by the fall, and cannot subdue this particular passion so perfectly to her reason as could pre-lapsarian man. It would be difficult however for a young woman, chaste by conviction and conscious of the prohibitions placed on any overt expression of attraction by both religion and society, to admit, even to herself, that her eye might have misled her heart rather more than her reason might wish to acknowledge, and that, despite her suitor's moral deficiencies, his person might persist in retaining its attractions.

To say this is not to accuse Clarissa of lust, but to recognize how problematic for character, author and reader are the ambiguities of human passions. Richardson himself was concerned to defend the nature of his heroine's feelings for Lovelace, and in the Postscript to the third edition answered those readers who accused her of being too cold in her love. He denied any intention that Clarissa should ever be in love with Lovelace, 'but in liking only', and claimed that she would never, if left to herself, have married Lovelace. He adds that what is called 'love' could properly be called by the harsher name of 'cupidity'.[iv, pp.558-559] However, despite this disclaimer, the reader must still feel, that without accusing Clarissa of 'cupidity' to any degree, Richardson's presentation of her, as opposed to what he says about her, suggests a young woman who is far from being devoid of natural passions, and is the

more psychologically valid for being so. According to Christian orthodoxy, even the purest of human beings is subject to imperfections in the control of such passions:

> Concupiscence insinuates itself where it is not needed, and by its troublesome and ever wicked desires it agitates even the hearts of the faithful and the saints. Even if we resist it and refuse to yield to its disturbing impulses with any conscious assent, we would still prefer by a holier desire that these impulses not be present in us at all, if it were possible; indeed some day this will happen![28]

This is exactly Clarissa's experience, but by the end of the novel, she will have endeavoured to enter that state, impossible to achieve in this life, but characteristic of the next, as St. Augustine asserts, of being devoid of such troubling desires. Clarissa's virtue in this life must therefore consist, not in the denial that such passions exist, or that she can, and does, feel an attraction to Lovelace, but in her steadfast adherence to the dictates of the eternal law by the exercise of her will, assisted by grace. Richardson's presentation of his heroine implicitly demonstrates that the impulses of the passions may be opposed to the determinations of reason, even in the purest of women, since the struggle between the two opposing forces is rooted in the duality of human nature.

There is evidence enough, even before the catastrophic effects of the rape lead Clarissa to a gradual rejection of the body, that she has desired the absence of those 'disturbing impulses' of which St. Augustine writes. The expected fate of a young woman of her class must be marriage, and Clarissa apparently accepts that this is inevitable. Yet given the painful example of her mother's position in the family, it would be surprising if Clarissa could approach the married state with unreserved enthusiasm. She has already rejected a number of suitors, and while her revulsion from Solmes is entirely understandable, it seems that her preference, were she allowed it, would be for celibacy. At the end of her life, when one such rejected suitor, Mr. Wyerley, renews his offer of marriage, Clarissa makes it clear that her

preference was always for the single life.(p.1268) She adds that since such a choice was not permitted to her, she had (dutifully) considered the various suitors proposed to her. Yet she always found something to which to object in their principles or morals. The reader may infer that for a woman who wishes to remain single, it is not too difficult to find legitimate reasons to reject any proposed suitor. Clarissa's attitude in this respect is consistent, since she tells Anna that a happy solution would be hers if the Harlowes were Roman Catholic, and she could enter a nunnery.(p.83) The reader must be uncertain whether this remark is an intimation at an early point of a preference for a Divine bridegroom, or an indication of a repugnance to marriage itself. However, to Clarissa, celibacy appears to represent both freedom and safety, since she refers to that state as 'the desired port, the *single state*, which I would fain steer into'.(p.281)

If it were only the prospect of Solmes as a husband which evoked such sentiments, it would hardly be surprising, but Clarissa seems to view relationships with the male sex as problematic in themselves. Desiring to be free of both Solmes and Lovelace, she writes of men in general that she would 'defy the sex':

> For I see nothing but trouble and vexation that they bring upon ours: and when once entered, one is obliged to go on with them, treading with tender feet upon thorns and sharper thorns, to the end of a painful journey.(p.358)

Lovelace presents a threat of another kind to that represented by the repulsive Solmes. Clarissa's soul is in no danger from the latter, but Lovelace's very attractions create a response which she cannot accept in herself. Her rational nature disapproves of his morals; her emotions divide between the natural response to so attractive a suitor and her own fear of that response. It is too much to claim that Clarissa might prefer death to the recognition of that attraction, but she might prefer

it to any suspicion in herself that a response in her has opened the way for 'liberties' – and worse – taken by Lovelace.

Her rigorous self-examination after the rape may exonerate her of any complicity in what has befallen her, and because she believes that 'to be *self*-acquitted is a blessing to be preferred to the opinion of all the world',[(p.360)] she may be assured that she may face the God of Judgement with a conscience clear of any doubts on the matter, or any conviction of sin. However, her emotional response does not seem to square with this rational conviction. Clarissa should regard any pollution of sin as belonging to Lovelace, but while she refers to him as 'vile', she also annexes the idea of pollution to her own flesh, and seems as much repelled by herself as by him. 'Now you have made me – what is it of vile that you have *not* made me?'[(p. 892)] she asks in one of her papers written after the rape. Recovered enough to confront Lovelace, and very clearly in her rational mind, even if shocked, she tells him:

> I hate thee not, base and low-souled as thou art! half as much as I hate myself, that I saw thee not sooner in thy proper colours![(p.901)]

Clarissa's lament after the rape that she has lost her 'self', may be related to her fable of the lady and the young lion, as at least one commentator has noted, the lady is punished because 'what she did, was out of nature, out of character at least'.[(p.891)] She has drawn her fate upon herself by behaving unlike herself, and so is to blame for what has happened.[(29)] The reader might enquire what Clarissa believes that she has done which is so much out of her character. For a young woman whose Christian piety makes sexual purity a virtue to be practised in so absolute a form as to render her unable even to admit the existence of a natural attraction, which she has no intention to indulge in any irregular way, such an attraction may in itself be perceived as a breach of the integrity of that absolute purity. In her response to Lovelace,

unconscious as it has been, Clarissa has allowed herself to go one step along the way to its expression.

The result has been catastrophic. Clarissa has touched the outermost edges of desire, and this is the result. If she castigates herself for her correspondence with Lovelace, it may well be because of her unconscious recognition that her motives in pursuing it were those of attraction. Had she not corresponded with him, she would not have found herself under his protection, and the rape could not have occurred. Clarissa's rational mind exonerates her, and rightly, of any complicity in the rape; her unconscious interpretation of events does not appear to do so. It is possible to infer from her sense of herself as 'vile' that Clarissa has found herself guilty, and responds with a self-condemnation which calls for unending penance, and which is marked by a revulsion from the flesh that has responded against her conscious will. Such revulsion would not in any case be psychologically implausible in a young woman of such exquisite moral refinement and sensitivity of character in her position, but Christianity would regard it as mistaken.

St. Augustine comforted women in Clarissa's situation, those who had suffered violation, with the assurance that despite the shame they might feel, they were not guilty of any sin, nor had they surrendered their chastity.(30) This is as rational a response to violation as Clarissa's in finding herself free of any complicity in the rape, but it also recognizes the likely emotional response that the innocent victim may experience shame. Clarissa's own emotional response to her experience leads her to a kind of self-hatred, but this is not entirely an attitude which is new in her. After the fire scene, she writes to Lovelace, 'I hate myself'.(p.732) Anger and indignation the reader might expect in her, but self-hatred is not an appropriate response, unless Clarissa feels that in her terror she has allowed Lovelace to come

closer than the boundaries set by her absolute standards of purity permit, and so exposed herself to the risk of violation, and perhaps to the dangers of her own unrecognized desires.

After the rape, she refers to 'this vile, this hated *self*'[p.974] and later, dying, writes to Anna, 'Yet how this *body* clings'.[p.1265] Even more disturbing for the reader is the way in which Clarissa's mind dwells on the fact of the physical decay which follows death. Belford records her satisfaction as she regards her coffin and comments of its white satin lining that it is 'soon ... to be tarnished by viler earth than any it could be covered by'.[p.1306] Clarissa's dream of being stabbed to death by Lovelace, thrown into a pit with two or three other half-dissolved carcasses, dirt being cast upon her by him, clearly has a link with this comment. The reader might consider that to become viler earth than that which is cast upon the dead is, then, the fate of Lovelace's women, as is spiritual death itself. That Clarissa appears to feel a kinship, however unjustified, to such women, is suggested by her reference to herself as a 'harlot-niece'.[p.909] Clarissa's remark indicates a sensibility, which, despite her rational conviction of innocence, finds the satisfaction of a terrible justice in the dissolution of the body which has been betrayed, and which she may also perceive as having itself betrayed that 'best self'.

A recent commentator has remarked that Lovelace and Clarissa have a unity in that they both 'hate the body'.[31] The matter is perhaps not quite so clear-cut. Both are opposed to what the body may represent. For Clarissa, the patriarchal system makes women's bodies a commodity or a currency to be exchanged for other goods such as status, wealth and land. Eventually her body becomes the site, and is possibly perceived as the source of sin, but of whose sin,

Clarissa may not be able to ascertain. For Lovelace, the body has its own tyranny; after the intellectual pleasures of intrigue, the impetus of the chase carries the body onwards, demanding a fulfilment of its own which Lovelace finds almost empty of pleasure. His situation in this respect illustrates the Christian contention that one effect of the fall has been the inability of the will to control the genitals as it controls the other bodily members. Lovelace, who is so desirous to control others, finds that his campaigns of seduction have their own momentum, which in this respect, removes a degree of control from him.

Lovelace presents a paradox in his sexual behaviour. He is familiar with brothels and the world of the rakes; he is the seducer of innumerable women, but he is essentially a cold man, motivated not by simple lust, a desire to enjoy female flesh, so much as by an insatiable desire for conquest. Unlike Milton's Adam, he does not burn in lust, but considers the act itself, once the woman's consent is gained, as an anti-climax. To him, the campaign is all-in-all, and the victory a mere disillusionment. Moreover, he is quite frank in his analysis of his own motivation. He writes to Belford:

> What ... is the enjoyment of the finest woman in the world, to the contrivance, the bustle, the surprises and at last the happy conclusion of a well-laid plot? – The charming *roundabouts*, to come the *nearest way home* – the doubts; the apprehensions; the heart achings, the meditated triumph – These are the joys that make the blessing dear – For all the rest, what is it? – What but to find an angel in imagination dwindled down to a woman in fact?(p.920)

Such remarks give an insight into the nature of Lovelace's sexuality; it exists in the imagination rather than in the body itself, and his dominant vice is not lust but pride. When Lovelace exercises his imagination in his fantasies, as when in the third edition he imagines an infatuated Clarissa succumbing to him,(ii, pp.251-252) the fantasy is the expression of desire for the gratification of conquest rather than of lust.

Pursuit, not consummation affords the pleasure, even in the imagination. However, the preference for pursuit over consummation reflects the comment of Jeremy Taylor on the ultimate emptiness of pursuing pleasure itself, and reminds the reader that, in Christian terms, the expression of sexuality cannot be a game, but has a serious purpose:

> The nature of sensual pleasure is vain, empty, and unsatisfying, biggest alwayes in expectation, and a meer vanity in the enjoying ... [32]

Mark Kinkead-Weekes has argued that Lovelace's egotism not only precludes his forming any satisfactory sexual relationship but also relieves him of any sense of the reality of others' existence; he may then despise them.[33] This contention cannot be disputed, but Christianity would claim that this is a pitiful as well as a spiritually dangerous state. While Lovelace inhabits it, he places himself outside the charity which unites the individual to both God and to his fellows. Because he has no sense that the exercise of sexuality has a primary purpose founded on God's eternal law, the exercise of his own sexuality shares the unreasoning nature of the beasts. Because he is without charity in the wider sense, it is not surprising – although it may be shocking to the reader – that even the act of rape may carry no resonances for him. Writing to Belford of the rape of Clarissa, to which he refers as 'a trifling incident', he continues:

> And yet I allow thee this; that she really makes too much of it: takes it too much to heart. To be sure she ought to have forgot it by this time, except the charming, charming consequence happen, that still I am in hopes will happen, were I to proceed no further.[p.916]

Even to contemplate proceeding further is to contemplate a possible repetition of the offence. The reader might consider such callous remarks merely as an expression of bravado on the part of a man who seeks to conceal from himself any compunction he might be expected to have for having committed such an act.

However, an earlier letter has already suggested instead a settled inability in Lovelace – the result of a hardening of sensibility as a result of habitual vice – to perceive the effects on others of a distorted sexuality compounded with pride. Clarissa is not the only woman whose innocence has been assaulted by the demands of Lovelace's egoism. He utters much the same sentiments in relation to Sally Martin, an earlier conquest. 'What a rout', he says, 'do these women make about nothing at all!'(p.534) Lovelace takes it upon himself to despise Sally for the life into which he has initiated her. The only woman whom he cannot despise is the woman who does not sacrifice to his pride, but this man who claims that his only fault is 'love of the sex' demonstrates by such remarks that he is incapable of love at all, but only capable of contempt:

> How do these creatures endeavour to stimulate me! A fallen woman, Jack, is a worse devil than even a profligate man. The former is above all remorse.(p.535)

Yet being 'above all remorse' is exactly Lovelace's conduct in relation to others. His attitude to the expression of sexuality is, in terms of Christian thought, a perversion in itself. While Christian theology recognizes that human sexuality is flawed, it still asserts that sexuality may be creative when it is expressed for the appropriate purpose, within the bonds of marriage, since 'marriage seeks the body's good – the bodily multiplication of the human race'.(34)

For Lovelace, however, marriage is 'a life of shackles', rather than the liberty of living in accordance with the eternal law. He does not perceive the Church's rite, which he despises, as anything more than a civil contract; at one point he playfully proposes a form of annual marriage for the sake of novelty.(p.873) Yet the playfulness of the suggestion indicates a refusal – or an inability – to see marriage as the appropriate expression of sexuality, a life-long commitment which Christianity has

always regarded as essential to the primary purpose of procreation and nurture of children.

Christianity can only perceive the sexual freedom habitually exercised by such men as Lovelace, whatever tolerance may be extended to him by society as both a man and a gentleman by birth, as a sin which compromises his salvation twice over; it is an abuse both of his own body and of those of his partners. Moreover, the idea of sexual sin as a form of self-abuse has a long history. St. Augustine also remarks upon it in a manner which reinforces the remarks of St. Paul,(35) 'It is the lusts which misuse the body ... the habits and inclinations of a soul to enjoy what is inferior'. In the light of such a comment, Lovelace's treatment of Clarissa in testing her, takes on an aspect which suggests Lovelace's own inadequacies.

Unlike St. Augustine, whose confession that he had taken a mistress is accompanied by the claim that he had been faithful to her, Lovelace insists on what St. Augustine calls 'an utterly shameless exercise of their slavish kind of freedom'.(36) He is unable to comprehend that his 'right' to take his pleasure at his pleasure, enthrals him to the servitude of vice and denies him any hope of the fulfilment that fidelity and love, as opposed to his own particular form of lust, could bring. His desire is that Clarissa will acquiesce in his plan to live the 'life of honour' with him, but the fantasies he entertains of such a life do not include any intention of fidelity even in an irregular union:

> He resolves never to marry any other woman: takes a pride to have her called by his name: church-rite all the difference between them ... Now and then, however, perhaps, indulging with a new object, in order to bring him back with a greater delight to his charming Clarissa – His only fault love of the sex – which nevertheless the women say will cure itself – Defensible thus far, that he breaks no contracts by his rovings – And what is there so very greatly amiss, as the world goes, in all this?(p.720)

Richardson is at pains to convey to his readers that this plan is *not* defensible in Christian terms, and that to act as this world goes is to risk the loss of salvation in the next. What is so very greatly amiss here is that Lovelace would not only be damaging Clarissa, whom he claims to love, emotionally and spiritually, and rendering insecure the future of the 'charming boys' whom he expects to result from the union, but he would also be damaging himself, by acting against his own best interests. Even when he imagines himself as Clarissa's husband, he sees that situation as advantageous to his access to Anna;[37] in this fantasy too, his motive for such an attempt is revenge rather than desire. For such sins, we are assured by Christian commentators, retribution may be slow in coming, but it *will* come:

> If any such women have suffered the violence of barbarian lust, they will not blame God for allowing it, nor will they believe that God makes light of such crimes. He allows them, but no-one can commit them with impunity. The truth is that in the mysterious justice of God the wickedness of desire is given rope, as it were, for the present, while its punishment is plainly being reserved for the final judgement.[38]

St. Augustine's remarks above apply no less to such men as to those the world of Rome would have termed 'barbarian' in his own day; few acts are more barbaric than rape.

Some of the additions to the third edition are designed to blacken Lovelace's character in this respect. The reader may regard Lovelace's fantasy of the triple rape of Mrs Howe, Anna, and their maid, as merely a fantasy, and one which, despite its unpleasant nature, is recounted with a verve which suggests the excess of Lovelace's inventive vivacity rather than a serious intention.[ii, pp.418-421] However, the Conclusion to the third edition makes it clear that Lovelace has already been party to the near rape of another mother and daughter, in Mrs Horton and Polly, when an excess of wine was used to procure the show of consent.[iv, p.546] The reader may see

little difference in effect between the use of drugs and the use of wine to achieve a conquest, whatever the folly, in this case, of the mother and daughter concerned. Moreover, Joseph Leman's letter to Lovelace, and the latter's response,(ii, pp.143-144 and pp.147-149) about the Miss Betterton affair, must leave the reader with questions – and is meant to do so – about the degree of Lovelace's culpability in the lady's loss of honour. Lovelace says it would have been cruel to ask a modest woman for consent, but without explicit consent, the reader may conclude that the case was one of rape.

Lovelace may tell Joseph that there was no rape in the case and add, 'rapes are unnatural things; and more rare than are imagined',(ii, p.148) but the third edition is even more likely than the first edition to persuade the reader that Lovelace might not only imagine rape, but resort to it for the sake of conquest if no other means suffice. The wit and humour with which he fantasises that he would escape justice, should Anna and Mrs Howe bring him to court, since all women present would exonerate him,(ii, pp.422-426) shows exactly why many of Richardson's first readers were brought to plead for him. Their response to Lovelace 'outside' the novel, is the response Lovelace expects from all women 'inside' the novel, and for the most part, may confidently expect. Lovelace's energy, wit and beauty prove irresistible to the unwary or unheeding. It is the response that induced Richardson to deepen the shades of his villain's character.

Lovelace's sexual behaviour and his pronouncements on his 'love of the sex' demonstrate a terrifying deficiency in him; he is incapable of distinguishing between love and lust, and between lust and a perverted self-love, which is nearer to self-hatred. Lovelace's debate with love in the third edition,(iii, pp.155-157) with its recognition that he and Clarissa define love in radically different ways, concludes ominously for Clarissa. The reader is left to question whether Lovelace has any

understanding of what love is, and to fear that if he should have a momentary insight into its nature, his pride would eradicate it. His advances to women, the attentions he offers them, the words of adoration he utters, are not the words and actions of a man who is capable of either sincerity or of respect and tenderness towards youth and innocence, nor are they those of a man so confused by the impulses of the flesh as to assume, temporarily, that it is love he feels rather than desire. Lovelace feels neither love nor true desire, only a compulsive urge to conquer, the origin of which must be located in deficiency, in a perversion of his soul. This deficiency reminds us that Christian theology defines sin in terms of negativity and absence.(39)

When St. Augustine distinguishes between the Christian interpretation of the word 'love' and the opposite meaning which should be attached to the term 'lust', his remarks have an application to that deficiency in Lovelace in which his inability to love must lie:

> By love I mean the impulses of one's mind to enjoy God on his own account and to enjoy oneself and one's neighbour on account of God; and by lust I mean the impulse of one's mind to enjoy oneself and one's neighbour and any corporal thing not on account of God. What unbridled lust does to corrupt the mind and body is called wickedness; what it does to harm another person is called wrongdoing. All sins can be divided into these two kinds, but wickedness comes first. Once it has depleted the mind and as it were, bankrupted it, it rushes on to commit wrongdoing in order to remove the obstacles to wickedness or to find assistance for it. Similarly, what love does to benefit a neighbour is known as kindness. And here self-interest comes first, because nobody can do good to another out of resources which he does not possess. The more the realm of lust is destroyed, the more the realm of love is increased.(40)

Lovelace's tragedy is that he does not understand how best to love himself; his egoism and self-indulgence are finally the opposite of self-interest in the sense of which St. Augustine writes above, since they deny him his eventual salvation, and preclude in this life any hope of the love which would allow him 'to enjoy God on his own account, oneself and one's neighbour on account of God'. Loving God does not

seem to be a consideration with him, since religion is a matter of intellectual and theoretical interest at best, if of any interest at all. His inability to love his neighbour is amply demonstrated by his readiness to use and abuse women, and to kill any man who objects to his doing so.

The reason which should characterize sexual relations between men and women, in Christian terms, is lacking in this man of pre-eminent rationality. For Lovelace, sex is shown to be essentially destructive, rather than creative in accordance with the eternal law. It is the means by which the negativity of his egoism – the 'wickedness' to which St. Augustine refers – finds its satisfaction, a satisfaction requiring continual renewal, or it is a weapon by which slights to his pride are revenged.

Lovelace's wickedness proceeds, as in St. Augustine's analysis, to wrongdoing. For him, the very language which expresses the relationship between the sexes is the language of warfare, of violence; he speaks of it in terms of campaigns and conquest. Lovelace's vision of the relationship between the sexes is given further explicit expression in the third edition. His remarks on the cruelty of women to the lower creation are complemented with his account of his own cruelty exercised on them as revenge.[ii, pp.247-248] There is no notion in his account of mutual harmony, respect or affection; his whole vision is one of destruction without remorse. He may claim to love Clarissa, to love the sex, but his behaviour demonstrates the hard-heartedness which he acknowledges to be essential to the character of a libertine.[ii, p.315] In the case of his relationship with Clarissa, Lovelace finally makes a weapon of his body itself, and so carries his perversion of sexuality to a logical conclusion in which pride, a distorted self-love and hatred are fused. Had Clarissa allowed herself to be seduced, Lovelace would have believed himself to have

asserted his superiority over the whole female sex in her person, a kind of parody of the Christian contention that God has chosen to subordinate female to male; Divine providence, Christianity might claim, did not intend that subordination should be established in this manner.

The act of rape to which Lovelace resorts when seduction will not serve, is the final perversion of the Divinely-ordained order of sexuality between male and female, because it is an act in which a mere physical mechanism operates, and as such, is divorced from all that might be defined as human; both reason and any sense of charity must be in abeyance. When Lovelace declares that he is not a machine, he fails to perceive that in this respect, at least, he has reduced himself to the status of a mechanical function. Richardson, however, has made his own comment on the mechanistic theories of human psychology which, according to Christian ideology, deny the dignity of man's freedom of choice and his access to grace. What the author could not have perceived was that his examination of the perversity of the human heart in this respect would be received, not as a powerful analysis of the effects of pride and egoism on this Divinely ordained function, but as inflammatory. Perhaps the irony of this misapprehension makes in itself an unanswerable comment on the decline of human innocence which resulted, in terms of Christian belief, from the fall.

8

'A Perverse Kind of Exaltation'

Both his author and the reader may suspect that Lovelace earns damnation, but it will not be his seductions of women nor his violent encounters with men which will damn him, so much as his indulgence of the predominant vice of which both seductions and murderous encounters are the expression. Lovelace's predominant sin is not violence, still less lust, since his seductions do not seem to be the result of a man's yielding to a sensual nature, but pride, which has found its expression in the construction of a self-image as an irresistible seducer and as a man of honour who meets any affront by resorting to the sword. Pride determines that Lovelace must claim pre-eminence over women and amongst men, and that any challenge to that assumption by female resistance or male affront must be met by the encompassment of the opposer's ruin.

Ecclesiasticus asserts that 'Pride is the beginning of sin, and he that hath it shall pour out abomination'. (10.13) Christian theologians of all persuasions have stressed the peculiarly dangerous nature of this particular sin. St. Augustine links the sin of pride with the exaltation of the self, and his description of the proud man could easily be appended to a portrait of Lovelace:

> And what is pride except a longing for a perverse kind of exaltation? For it is a perverse kind of exaltation to abandon the basis on which the mind should be firmly fixed, and to become, as it were, based on oneself, and so remain. This happens when a man is too pleased with himself: and a man is self-complacent when he deserts the changeless Good in which, rather than in himself, he ought to have found his satisfaction.[1]

No-one who gives Clarissa even the most cursory reading could fail to perceive that if any character in the novel is 'too pleased with himself' – or rather with the image he creates, for his 'self' is always in doubt – it is Lovelace. His very first letter sounds the note which resonates throughout the whole novel in that his repeated use of the word 'pride' and the impression given of a soul in which this sin has an habitual dominion must impose themselves upon the reader. The self-analysis the letter contains confesses that his pursuit of Clarissa is motivated more by pride than by love, and that his present object is triumph over the whole female sex in the person of his intended victim, as well as to force the Harlowes, especially James, whom he describes as 'sordidly-imperious' to acknowledge his pre-eminence.(p.145) Lovelace appears unaware of the irony of his describing James in such terms. Richardson himself hoped that his readers would perceive the note of pride in this initial letter, since he writes to Lady Bradshaigh on this very point:

> And did you not perceive, that in the very first Letter of Lovelace all those Seeds of Wickedness were thick sown, which sprouted up into Action afterwards in his Character? – Pride, Revenge, a Love of Intrigue, Plot, Contrivance! – And who is it that asks, *Do Men gather Grapes of Thorns, or Figs of Thistles*?(2)

In asserting his superiority, and in claiming the right to pre-eminence, and in the manipulations of others which bring them to accede to his designs and to do his will, Lovelace sets himself up as a parody of Divine providence. As St. Augustine points out:

> Thus pride is a perverted imitation of God. For pride hates a fellowship of equality under God, and seeks to impose its own dominion on fellow men, in place of God's rule. This means that it hates the just peace of God, and loves its own peace of injustice.(3)

We are reminded that Lucifer too, hated equality under God, and sought to displace Divine dominion by his own. Theologians of very different traditions all find in Lucifer the prototype and exponent of this particular sin, but pride is the same

in its nature, and has the same origin, in both man and fallen angel. St. Augustine makes the point that both man and devil have fallen because of this same sin, and that in seeking to be more than their essential natures were intended to be, make themselves less. In this way, the proud man approaches the condition of Lucifer, the adversary of Christ, in whom 'exaltation ... exercises supreme dominion':

> We can see then that the Devil would not have entrapped man by the obvious and open sin of doing what God had forbidden, had not man already started to please himself. That is why he was delighted with the statement, 'You will be like gods'. In fact they would have been better able to be like gods if they had in obedience adhered to the supreme and real ground of their being, if they had not in pride made themselves their own ground. For created gods are gods not in their true nature but by participation in the true God. By aiming at more, a man is diminished, when he elects to be self-sufficient and defects from the one who is really sufficient for him.(4)

As the supreme example in Richardson's novels of the disordered self-love which is pride, it is clear that Lovelace very much resembles in this respect the Satan with whom he sometimes, with satisfaction, compares himself. Pride exercises supreme dominion in him, and like Lucifer, in giving it expression, he sets himself up in opposition to God, by taking it upon himself to dispose of the lives of others. In particular, he claims supremacy over his fellows on the grounds of his intellectual superiority. Such claims are similar to those of the demons, so named because of their knowledge, as St. Augustine tells us. He goes on to explain that the misuse of knowledge is a dangerous matter, quoting St. Paul when he says, 'knowledge inflates: but love edifies'.(5) He then enlarges on the Apostle's words:

> Without charity, knowledge inflates; that is, it exalts men to an arrogance that is nothing but a kind of windy emptiness. There is in the demons knowledge without charity, and so they are inflated; that is to say they are so arrogant that they have done their best to obtain for themselves the divine honours and the devout service which they know to be due to the true God. ... Against this arrogance of the demons, to which mankind was enslaved as a deserved punishment, is set the humility of God, revealed in Christ. But the power of humility is unknown to men whose souls are inflated with the impurity of

> inflated pride. They resemble the demons in arrogance, but not in knowledge.(6)

Lovelace's intellect, then, avails him nothing as far as the vital question of his salvation is concerned. And his arrogance echoes that of the demons. He has not even glimpsed, because of that arrogance, the knowledge he needs to save his soul. However, he asserts his control over a group of followers who, but for Belford, are a sorry crew, and boasts of being their captain in a manner which resembles the pride of Milton's Satan in his own pre-eminence over the devils in hell in working harm:

> To me shall be the glory sole among
> The Infernal Powers, in one day to have marred
> What he, Almighty styled, six nights and days
> Continued making ...(7)

Like Satan, Lovelace seeks to ruin what God has created, the souls of the innocent, and in doing so, degrades his own humanity as Satan degrades his angelic nature by his own pride; to exalt himself, he will, paradoxically, stoop to assume any degrading form:

> O foul descent! that I, who erst contended
> With Gods to sit the highest, am now constrained
> Into a beast, and mixed with bestial slime,
> This essence to incarnate and imbrute,
> That to the height of deity aspired;
> But what will not ambition and revenge
> Descend to?(8)

Just as Satan is degraded not so much by his disguise itself as by his purpose in assuming it, the destruction of man and the exaltation of self which leads him to attempt it, so Lovelace is not degraded by the disguises he assumes in his attempts on Clarissa, but by his purposes in assuming them, seduction and the desire for revenge on the Harlowes, which is, in reality, another manifestation of his pride. However, like Satan, he is offended by his disguise:

> My lodging ... at a wretched alehouse, disguised like an inmate of it: accommodations equally vile as those I met with in my Westphalian journey.(p.146)

In both cases, pride makes such dispositions in order to assert its supremacy and to take its revenge for the denial of aspirations which are not, in reality, its right to have. In this respect, Lovelace's dominant disorder of the soul could be seen as being characterized by Aquinas's definition of pride, 'a special sin with a special object: a disordered desire for one's own excellence'.(9)

The word 'disordered' is especially relevant since Richardson explores the nature and effects of such disorder not only in his villain, but also in his heroine. However, there is a vitally important distinction between their respective manifestations of pride, since Clarissa comes to recognize the existence of the disorder within her own soul, repents of it, overcomes it, and substitutes for it a desire for excellence which is *not* disordered, since it relates to virtue, and demands the rejection of the pride which is a sin. In the letter which Anna writes to Belford after Clarissa's death, describing the various excellencies of her friend's character, she quotes Clarissa's own words on the subject. 'There is but one pride pardonable; that of being above doing a base or a dishonourable action'.(p.1466)

This is a lesson which Clarissa must have learned in a theoretical manner before the revelation to herself of her own sinful pride, since we may infer that any such conversations on the matter with Anna would have taken place in the days before her trial began; by the end of her life, she has learned the truth of her own words by experience. Her comment indicates that a certain type of pride is not only permissible, but laudable, and leaves the reader to draw the inference that the type of pride which does not accord with this definition is far from being above base and dishonourable actions.

The portrait of her friend which Anna offers to Belford characterizes the state which Clarissa finally achieves, rather than the faulty state which she is forced to recognize in herself during the course of her experiences – or rather as a result of her experiences – in which she herself comes to acknowledge that she has harboured secret pride. In the third edition, Richardson expanded on his heroine's self-examination in this respect, so that both her repentance and an implicit contrast to Lovelace's own pride were thrown into sharper relief.(ii, pp.378-379) However, her remark about pardonable pride is supplemented by her comments on the complementary virtue of an appropriate humility. Such a virtue recognizes our own value, but gratefully acknowledges the endowments with which God has graced the individual person:

> The darkest and most contemptible ignorance is that of not knowing one's self; and that all we have, and all we excel in, is the gift of God. ... The excellence that makes every other excellence amiable is HUMILITY.(p.1466)

Clarissa rejects the pride which exalts the self into undue importance, but insists that a grateful recognition of one's own endowments is to give them their appropriate value as the gifts of God. In doing so, she expresses a view consistent with that of Christian orthodoxy, which is that man has value because he is made in the Divine image, and has been so placed above all other creatures, bar the angels. However, to recognize and exalt one's own endowments without an appropriate gratitude is not only the expression of a disordered pride, but is also an act of folly; it is, in the fullest sense of the word, unreasonable. Aquinas comments on the matter:

> Pride is wanting to get above oneself. Right reason sets one's will on what is appropriate to oneself, so pride goes against reason and that is sinful: *to act unreasonably is an evil of soul*.(10)

On the other hand, he points out that humility is fully in accord with reason, and so dignifies the person who practises it. It is concerned with giving an appropriate value to the self as well as to others, and above all, to God's dispositions:

> Humility reverences God and esteems what we have from ourselves less than what our fellowmen have from God. It does not require us to esteem what we have from God less than what others have from him, or what we have from ourselves less than what they have from themselves.(11)

Clearly, judged in the light of such considerations, both Lovelace and Clarissa, the former throughout the whole course of the novel, and the latter in the earlier stages of her experiences, stand in a state of sin. However, by means of those experiences, she painfully learns the lessons of humility and achieves the balance of value for self, and value for others, which both her own remarks on the opposing characteristics of pride and humility, and those of Aquinas quoted above, describe. Lovelace never learns, and remains in a perilous state of sin because of the undue value which he places upon his own gifts, upon his pre-eminence among his associates, and over those whom he corrupts and manipulates, at once exalting himself and denying others their value. He compounds his sin in that he achieves his pre-eminence by turning his considerable gifts of mind and person to evil purposes more skilfully than his fellow-rakes could ever do, since they lack the excellence of his endowments.

In this way, Lovelace's sinful pride is rendered more dangerous in its effects by the abuse of God's gifts, and this constitutes a perversion, since those gifts were bestowed to help him towards man's ultimate goal, and for the service of others. His behaviour, therefore, could be seen as more reprehensible than in a man less gifted than himself. His pride is not only an evil in itself, since it gives him 'an unbalanced love of [his] own importance',(12) but it is also misplaced, since the personal

endowments which create in him so much disordered pride he regards as attributes of his own, rather than as the gifts of God.(13) His improper self-love is indulged at the expense of others, and to his own ultimate ruin. On the other hand, Clarissa's remarks on the species of pride which is *not* disordered, coupled with her comments on the value of humility, serve to assert the worth of the human person, since they acknowledge that every individual has value, however he might stand in the estimation of the world:

> All human excellence is but comparative – there are persons who excel us, as much as we fancy we excel the meanest. In the general scale of beings, the lowest is as useful, and as much a link of the great chain, as the highest.(p.1466)

Lovelace is never seen to accept that anyone might excel him, until he encounters Clarissa, when the virtues which are her particular excellence, and which reveal to him his own defects, become an additional motive for him to determine to establish his supremacy. Clarissa's own recognition that the antidote to pride is the just estimation of our own value and of the value of others, stands in marked contrast to Lovelace's self-exaltation. It is also in accordance with the consistent view of Christianity on the matter. Two comments from theologians of differing traditions will serve to illustrate this contention. Aquinas comments on the matter:

> By humility a man restrains himself from getting above himself, and for this, he needs to know the limit of his abilities.(14)

About five hundred years later, William Law offers a similar thought, although differently expressed:

> Humility does not consist in having a worse opinion of ourselves than we deserve, or in abasing ourselves lower than we really are. But as all virtue is founded in truth, so humility is founded in a true and just sense of our weakness, misery and sin.(15)

It follows that the proud lack that sense of our 'weakness, misery and sin', while being firmly entrenched within this very state. No-one can claim, as Lovelace

does, the supremacy of his own value, or the right to the predominance of his own will, since in this world there will always be, as Clarissa's comments point out, some other person whose excellence, in any given field, exceeds our own, and further, in relation to God, no human being may claim any absolute virtue or excellence. Her remarks in this respect relate to long-established Christian thinking on the matter. In describing Divine perfection, Aquinas for example points out that the perfections of creatures can only really exist in God, and as reflections of His own excellence:

> Indeed, as the origin of all activity God is supremely actual, and thus supremely perfect, since perfect means achieved, realized, lacking nothing one's particular mode of perfection requires. Moreover, his perfection is all-embracing: the diverse (and sometimes opposed) perfections of creatures all pre-exist united in God, without detriment to his simpleness.(16)

In the light of this notion, if Clarissa's thoughts about relative excellences are carried to their just conclusion, her supplementary comments concerning the generally unpardonable nature of pride – except for that species of pride which is in reality a due regard for virtue – convey to the reader the folly and futility of this sin, and remind him, by implication, of the danger in which Lovelace stands. He does not see his very considerable 'excellences' as relative, but in his arrogance seems to regard them, like those of God, as absolute. An intelligent man should know better; the recognition of man's dependence on God and of the gifts with which God has endowed him have long been acknowledged by Christian thinkers, but Lovelace displays no such moderation which Aquinas claims above as the attribute of humility. Moreover, the humility which would have led him to just estimation of his own true value as a Divine creation in God's image, and to a just estimation of the value of others for the same reason, is the virtue which would have set him above 'doing a base or dishonourable action', for such humility is very close to the pride which *is* permissible. His own disordered pride has no such effect, but rather leads him to a

way of life in which his inappropriate self-regard has both imperilled his soul and encompassed the corruption or the death of others. The egocentricity of pride is opposed to the charity which gives due value to one's neighbour.

In contrast, the pride which Clarissa comes to profess, and which she declares is pardonable, is a species of virtue, paradoxically closely allied to humility, since it declines to devalue the dignity of the human person, and seeks to avoid any act which will compromise the soul of its professor or damage a fellow-man by corruption. Likewise, her use of the word 'dishonourable' gives the term a diametrically opposed value to that which Lovelace might give it, since 'dishonourable' to him would refer to whatever could damage his sense of self in his own eyes, or in the eyes of those who conform to worldly values. Conversely, the word 'honourable' to him refers to whatever will confirm his disordered sense of his own importance, while to Clarissa, it means whatever will reverence God in so behaving that His eternal law is observed, both in relation to one's own soul and in charity to others. The same shift of meaning might be observed in their respective uses of the word 'pride' itself, since the pardonable pride she professes must have a diametrically opposed meaning to the value which Lovelace gives the term.

Clarissa herself becomes aware of the distorted values by which he lives and describes them to Anna in terms that perceptively analyze their intrinsic negativity and shamefulness:

> But his pride has eaten up his prudence. It is indeed a dirty, low pride that has swallowed up the *true* pride which should have set him above the vanity that has overrun him.(p.560)

Just how far Lovelace is from any understanding of the nature of that true pride, and how far his values are hopelessly distorted, is shown by a remark of his own which employs the same terms as Clarissa's comment above, but which makes

clear the opposing meaning he attaches to them. Lovelace may be striking one of his accustomed attitudes when he tells 'Captain Tomlinson' in Clarissa's presence that his carelessness and levity towards his family is the result of 'a pride that has set me above meanness'(p.841) but he fails to perceive that true pride would set him above the lack of charity thus revealed. 'Pride' in the definition of the word which Clarissa learns painfully to give it, would have set him above lies, seduction, rape and violence. However, *his* notion of pride, like his notion of honour, can lead only to death, the physical death of his opponents or himself in duels, and the spiritual death of himself, his followers, and his corrupted victims. His pride is shown to be the negation of all that virtue is, and so his honour is void. Lovelace's species of pride is nowhere characterized better than by the words of William Law:

> Pride is only the disorder of the fallen world, it has no place amongst other beings; it can only subsist where ignorance and sensuality, lies and falsehood, lusts and impurity, reign.(17)

That such pride is essentially unreasonable would appear to be a concept which Lovelace is incapable of comprehending, but it is something which Christian commentators have steadily asserted. St. Augustine reflects on this contrast between self-exaltation and the humility which opposes it, in terms which define the relationship between God and man, to the honour of the former and the profit of the latter. Reflecting on the Tower of Babel as a symbol of 'arrogant impiety', he asks:

> When all is said, what harm could be done to God by any spiritual self-exaltation or material elevation however high it soared? The safe and genuine highway to heaven is constructed by humility, which lifts up its heart *to* the Lord, not against the Lord ... (18)

A commentator closer to Richardson's own time, Richard Steele, is equally convinced that pride of the kind which Lovelace exhibits, can only be based on a false estimation of one's own value, and an unjust self-exaltation. Lovelace may assert that his pride places him above a mean action, but Steele's remarks

characterize Lovelace's species of pride as mean in its very nature, and an opposing humility as both just and apposite:

> For as certainly as Pride proceeds from a mean and narrow view of the little Advantages about a Man's self, so Meekness is founded on the extended contemplation of the Place we bear in the Universe, and a just Observation how little, how empty, how wavering are our deepest Resolves and Councils.(19)

Lovelace is not alone among Richardson's characters in exhibiting this disordered sense of his own importance. Pamela, Clarissa and Sir Charles all display the symptoms of pride in varying degrees, but they all consciously strive to live virtuously, and if they do not always recognize pride within their own hearts, they do acknowledge the heinousness of the sin itself, and the opposing value of humility. Lovelace appears to be almost another species of moral being in this respect. Like Satan, he is characterized by pride in all his actions. When the stricken Clarissa, after the rape, cries out to Lovelace, 'I knew not that you were vice itself!'(p.892) the reader may be in little doubt that the vice which Lovelace embodies is not lust, but pride.

Such a vice is not practised in isolation, although its primary effects are to be seen in the soul of the sinner himself. The most serious of these must be, since he loses a just estimation of himself in relation to God, the separation from Him that attends any serious sin. St. Augustine refers to this effect when he discusses the grace of God, 'from which the proud are estranged so that they fall, with which the humble are filled so that they rise up'.(20) It is the nature of pride that the very self-will which characterizes it puts a barrier between the proud man and God's grace, which makes a reconciliation in this estrangement all the more difficult. The proud, as Milton notes in his descriptions of Moloch and Mammon, exemplify

the wilful blindness and arrogance which refuses to seek reconciliation by seeking grace. Thus Moloch:

> His trust was with th'Eternal to be deemed
> Equal in strength, and rather than be less
> Cared not to be at all; with that care lost
> Went all his fear.(21)

The proud will not give up their own sense of superiority, even to gain heaven, or to sustain life itself. Like the fallen angels who cannot endure to abandon the image of themselves as rivals to God, and cannot accept the futility of their opposition to the Almighty, Lovelace cannot endure, even for the sake of his soul's salvation, to abandon the futile self-image which he has created, that of the invincible seducer and manipulator. He must exalt himself above all whom he encounters, failing to see that the exercise of the superiority he claims, because it is illegitimate and ultimately leads to his ruin, renders him inferior to those whom he despises for their virtue. Finally, presented with impregnable virtue in Clarissa, he cannot endure its existence any more than Milton's devils can bear the supremacy of God. Lovelace writes to Belford:

> If I give up my contrivances, my joy in stratagem, and plot, and invention, I shall be but a common man: such another dull, heavy creature as thyself.(p.907)

However, he writes to a man who has begun to understand the dangerous folly of such pride, both in its effects on its professor, and on those whom the plots and stratagems are intended to deceive. Eventually Lovelace is forced to acknowledge that such pride as this is grounded in the fear of being compelled to recognize his own inferiority, but he appears to grasp the essential meanness of his pride only briefly, under the pressure of emotions which overwhelm him after the death of Clarissa. The reader may perceive the emptiness that underlies his self-exaltation, and for once, Lovelace himself comes close to a perception of it:

> To bring her down from among the stars which her beamy head was surrounded by, that my wife, so greatly above me, might not too much despise me – this was part of my reptile envy, owing to my *more* reptile apprehension of inferiority.(p.1344)

The truly humble do not have such 'apprehension of inferiority', and the truly repentant would abandon the pride which has precluded any honest relationship with Clarissa – or with anyone else – and with God. However, any impulse in the direction of sincerity and repentance is lost when Lovelace's pride in the self-image he has constructed reasserts itself, and he rejects with horror the trial of self-examination, which, met with an attempt at honesty and an acknowledgement of his own sinfulness, might have saved his soul. His pride would rather expose him to the risk of that loss than to the risk of losing the idol he has constructed, which has, in a sense, become Lovelace's substitute deity.

Nor can he endure that others should perceive him as less than superior to the rest of mankind, and he insists on maintaining this image of superiority even when he compounds his sins by doing so, and does so with full knowledge. In the proposed engagement between himself and Morden, he is fully aware that he is in the wrong – if there can be anything that is *right* about such a situation – rather than his opponent, but he will not acknowledge his fault, repent, and withdraw. He prefers to compound his sins in relation to Clarissa by the likelihood of being responsible for the death of her cousin, because his false notion of 'honour' demands that he cannot be suspected of fearing any man. So Lovelace's pride not only separates him from God because it precludes repentance, but also prevents him from achieving any understanding of what would, in truth, constitute honour. He writes to Belford about the proposed meeting with Morden:

> I can't bear to be threatened, Jack. Nor shall any man, unquestioned, give himself airs in my absence, if I know it, that shall make me look mean in anybody's eyes: that shall give my friends pain

for me: that shall put them upon wishing me to change my intentions, or my plan, to avoid him. Upon such despicable terms as these, thinkest thou that I could bear to live?

However, he adds a little later in the same letter:

> In short, I am as much convinced that I have done wrong as he can be; and regret it as much. But I will not bear to be threatened by any man in the world, however conscious of having deserved blame.(p.1476)

Lovelace's insight into the meanness of his pride has quickly passed, and the habitual reversal of values which pride creates has soon reasserted itself. His behaviour is determined by the threat to the image of himself that he has created, and thus, he has become a slave to it.

If Lovelace locates the security of his identity in this self-created image and cannot endure – through pride or fear, which in this case are closely allied, if not identical – to risk the loss of it, even at the expense of his soul, then he deceives himself as to what is of value in this world and in the next. He could only create a secure identity through that interrogation of his own heart which he declines to undertake, through an admission of his culpability, and through sustained repentance. However, as Thomas à Kempis tells us, 'the security of the wicked springs from pride and presumption, and ends in self-deception'.(22) Lovelace convinces himself of his superiority and invincibility, but the self-deception which refuses to acknowledge where life and true honour are located, also deprives him of any understanding of the value and dignity of himself and of others as the image of God, in which he could find a real identity.

Lovelace lives and dies in this state of self-deception, and the reader can only fear the results, as Richardson appears to have intended that he should, for a man who arrives at the point of death in such a state. Lovelace, however, has long ago locked himself into a kind of bondage imposed by pride. The man who cannot bear to be

threatened by another, subjects himself to a tyranny imposed by his self-exaltation, by the image of himself that he cherishes and desires, or needs, others to worship, at whatever cost. He describes himself as a man:

> Who never did anything I was ashamed to own, and who have more [ingenuousness] than ever man had; who can call a villainy by its right name, though practised by myself, and (by my readiness to reproach myself) anticipate all reproach from others; who am not such a hypocrite as to wish the world to think me other or better than I am![(p.1237)]

A man who says that he does not wish others to think him better than he is, deceives himself, if, like Lovelace, he makes every endeavour to present himself to the admiration of all. Even when he invades the Smiths' shop in search of Clarissa, he afterwards records with satisfaction the impression of gaiety and good-humour he perceived himself to make on everyone present, including the bystanders, although all these people were nothing more than momentary acquaintances. Lovelace is concerned, above all, to have people think of him as he wishes to appear, and so is far from being the free agent he professes to be when he thinks of others as his puppets, since the necessity he feels to maintain his false and futile self-image deprives him of any true autonomy. He is a slave to this self image in that each conquest must be succeeded by another, and since he cannot bear to be thwarted, his life must be in thrall to his own need for continual 'triumphs' if that self-image of potency and dominion is not to be replaced by knowledge of the spiritual poverty which underlies it.

In this respect Lovelace both embodies and exemplifies the folly of pride, which in seeking to dominate and control, renders itself a slave. The comments of St. Augustine when he discusses this point are appropriate to Lovelace's condition:

> Now, as our Lord above says, 'Everyone who commits sin is sin's slave', and that is why, though many devout men are slaves to unrighteous masters, yet the masters they serve are not themselves

> free men; 'for when a man is conquered by another he is also bound as a slave to his conqueror'. And obviously it is a happier lot to be slave to a human being than to a lust; and, in fact, the most pitiless domination that devastates the hearts of men, is that exercised by this very lust for domination, to mention no others.(23)

Those whom Lovelace despises, the Mr. Hickmans of this world, exercise a greater autonomy than the man who despises them because of their adherence to the laws of God. Once again like Milton's Satan, Lovelace makes a fundamental error about the respective natures of freedom and servitude, and fails to see that the service of God offers man the greatest freedom, and the service of self locks him into a hell of his own making. When Abdiel addresses Satan as 'Fool' he does so because he recognises that the pride which aspires to equality with God is futile. Satan, however, asserts his freedom, and the servility of those who serve God. Abdiel's reply to this scornful comment reveals the true nature of servitude, locating it in Satan's pride, which, like that of Lovelace, rests on his self-exaltation, and which is therefore insecurely based. All he has gained by indulging it, is Hell:

> Apostate! Still thou err'st, nor end wilt find
> Of erring, from the path of truth remote.
> Unjustly, thou deprav'st it with the name
> Of servitude, to serve whom God ordains,
> Or Nature: God and Nature bid the same,
> When he who rules is worthiest, and excels
> Them whom he governs. This is servitude –
> To serve th'unwise, or him who hath rebelled
> Against his worthier, as thine now serve thee,
> Thyself not free, but to thyself enthralled;
> Yet lewdly dar'st our minist'ring upbraid.(24)

In the same way, Lovelace is at once 'enthralled' to himself, to his pride and to the image he has created, and upbraids those who seek to serve God in virtue and humility. Belford as much as Hickman is the subject of Lovelace's mockery when he begins to reform, while Lovelace, who sees his own sinfulness as the evidence of his autonomy, cannot see the totality of his servitude. The stratagems on which he so

much prides himself, and which, in the case of his attempt on Clarissa alone, require the pretence of love and reverence so that he may win her, recall the hypocritical behaviour of Satan, whose respectful approach to Eve conceals his plan of betrayal. Lovelace promises Clarissa freedom from the tyranny of her family, but intends to exercise a tyranny himself; the pride of Milton's Satan leads him to the same hypocritical behaviour. Neither Lovelace nor Satan can ever afford to be honest in their responses to God and to their peers, or their whole notion of themselves would collapse in ruin, and they would be left to face their own essential negativity.

> The effects of his pride are equally destructive to his fellow-men. Richardson's anti-hero might well say with Milton's Satan:
>
> For only in destroying I find ease
> To my relentless thoughts.[25]

Satan's pride leads others into Hell, and the revenge inspired by his thwarted ambition results in the corruption of man, setting in train the long course of human suffering. Lovelace's pride has the same destructive force; in attempting to satisfy its endless demands for tribute, he corrupts and destroys in one way or another. He enquires of Belford, 'What signifies power, if we do not exert it?'[p.610] and speaking of Anna remarks, 'What pleasure should I have in breaking such a spirit!'.[p.637] Such remarks are indicative of a soul which seeks to find fulfilment in destruction. He might as well say with Satan, 'Evil, be thou my Good'.[26]

While this vice holds dominion in him, he is incapable of the exercise of any virtue, while what appears to be virtue in him often is, as Clarissa recognises, merely a further expression of his vanity:

> Mr. Lovelace is a proud man ... and I am truly afraid that his very generosity is more owing to his *pride* and his *vanity*, than to that *philanthropy* which distinguishes a beneficent mind.[p.698]

From such pride arise the envy, ambition and desire for revenge which characterize Lovelace's relationships with his fellow-men. Clarissa's virtue is an incentive to despoil her, to destroy in her the qualities which he himself does not possess. Revenge for affronts, both fancied and actual, from the Harlowes, compounds his envy, and the ambition to be 'the greatest conqueror in the world' finds its outlet in a series of seductions and a number of duels, some of them fatal to his opponents. Christian commentators have not failed to point out that such pride gives rise to other sins. Thomas à Kempis declares 'From this vice of inordinate self-love springs nearly all those other failings that have to be completely overcome'.(27) On this very same point, Calvin is equally uncompromising in linking pride with every other vice and sin: 'Sin in man is made by perfidy, cruelty, pride, intemperance, envy, blind love of self, any kind of depraved lust'.(28)

Such a comment emphasizes that pride must have its destructive effects, if it goes unchecked, on the lives and souls of others. Milton's Satan, seeking to revenge himself for his own losses on God's new creation, does so by spreading the contagion of pride to man. Crouching 'like a toad' by Eve's ear, he raises in her:

> Vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires,
> Blown up with high conceits engendering pride.(29)

Lovelace long ago succumbed to such temptations himself, being full of 'vain aims', and 'inordinate desires', and so contaminated, spreads his own contagion. The vicious envy of Polly and Sally, made more explicit in the third edition,(iii, pp.275-276) shows the results of it in those who have become tributes to his unrestrained passion for dominion. It is no less destructive in every other relationship; the rakes are spurred to emulation by his example; his family are treated with contempt and manipulated to his advantage; his friend Belford is valued only insofar as he

emulates, but does not aspire to exceed; his servants are treated with arrogant brutality which reduces them to objects to be abused at a whim. The correspondence between Lovelace and Joseph Leman in the third edition, intended to deepen the shades of Lovelace's character, demonstrates both Lovelace's skill in manipulating the already weak and venal, and the corruption that results from it.(ii, pp.143-153) Lovelace's self-regard leaves no room for the charity which alone can offer any true satisfaction and fulfilment.

William Law points out the penalties which await those who show contempt for their fellow-men by so far rejecting the graces of charity. He distinguishes between the man who may let fall a hasty or an injudicious word, and he who displays towards others a settled and deliberate contempt. Law's words offer a gloss on those of Christ:

> Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. (Matt. 5.22)

Law comments:

> But he that says 'Raca' or 'Thou fool' must chiefly mean him that allows himself in deliberate, designed acts of scorn and contempt towards his brother, and in that temper speaks to him and of him in reproachful language. ... For to despise one for whom Christ died is to be as contrary to Christ as he that despises anything that Christ has said or done.(30)

No-one could despise his brother more than the man whose egocentricity can only perceive his fellow-men as puppets to be manipulated at his whim, or as obstacles to be overcome. William Law holds such behaviour as a species of blasphemy, since if it were profane, he tells us, to trample on the altar of God, it would be no less profane 'to scorn and trample upon a brother who so belongs to God that his very body is to be considered as the Temple of the Holy Ghost'.(31) Any such considerations appear to have escaped Lovelace. The women whom he seduces, the

men whom he kills, those whom he corrupts, are less the Temples of the Holy Ghost than sacrificial victims to his pride. In a sense, he has set himself up, as Satan wished to do, as an alternative deity, and the offerings of virtue that might have been given to God within the precincts of these holy temples are transmuted into the desecrated victims of an idol. The insult to God and the injuries done to God's creation constitute thereby the very antithesis of the charity which should unite God and man in love.

Similarly, it might be inferred that the advice offered by Jeremy Taylor that inordinate self-love requires restraint would appear nonsensical to such as Lovelace:

> Never compare thy self with others, unlesse it be to advance them and to depresse thy self. To which purpose we must be sure in some sence or other to think our selves the worst in every company where we come: one is more learned than I am; another is more prudent; a third, honourable; a fourth more chast; or he is more charitable, or lesse proud.(32)

When Lovelace claims a superiority which expresses itself in regarding others as mere objects to be manipulated, controlled and discarded, prescriptions which suggest that salvation attends the humble and that a man should make a just assessment of his own deficiencies in relation to others, could only threaten the self-image which appears to offer a desirable identity. Lovelace resists any such threat with a tenacity which suggests, at least when he is threatened with madness, an underlying insecurity about that very identity. If he needs others at all, it is to confirm the validity of that self-image, and any threat to it in the form of assertion of autonomy by another is met with an outraged response, and a renewed resolution to achieve dominion. His very determination to overcome Clarissa's own resistance to him is fuelled by fear of the threat which the firmness of that resistance represents.

The reader may suspect that such determination on his part finds its origin in the insecurity of the validity of the self which Lovelace claims to be and wishes to

appear to be. He enquires of Belford, 'Why, why will the dear creature take such pains to appear all ice to me? Why will she, by *her* pride, awaken *mine*?'.(p.413) Or he comments elsewhere: 'I can put her to trials as mortifying to her niceness, as glorifying to my pride'.(p.387) And again: 'How it swells my pride to have been able to outwit such a vigilant charmer!'.(p.402)

An attitude expressive of all the competitiveness of pride, which finds domination a necessity to existence itself, finally isolates the man who professes it, and damages those who are its victims. Such damage, as probably in the case of Polly and Sally, may extend to eventual damnation. The Conclusion to the third edition explicitly declares that if Sally had not met with Lovelace, she would have avoided a connection with Mrs Sinclair,(iv. p.552) and that her hardened conscience resulted in doing all she could to promote Lovelace's pleasures by drawing in others to follow her example.(iv, pp.541-542) The effects of Lovelace's pride are thus perpetuated almost without limit. True, Polly and Sally could have sought grace to repent of their fall, or could have resisted the temptation which Lovelace represented, but without his own sinful pride, they would not have been exposed to this particular sin at all. The pride which does such damage, according to one Christian theologian at least, relates a man more nearly to Satan than to God; Richard Baxter remarks that 'so far as any man is proud he is kin to the devil, and utterly a stranger to God and to himself'.(33)

One aspect of the tragedy of Lovelace is that pride deprives him of the insight which would enable him to know himself well enough to recognize his own defects before he puts himself beyond the reach of grace. Thomas à Kempis reflects on the damage that such a man inflicts on himself, to the compromise of his eternal prospects:

> Empty conceit is like an evil disease, and the most monstrous of vanities, for it leads a man away from true glory, and robs him of heavenly grace.(34)

Saint Augustine likewise points out that the abandonment of God through the elevation of self brings the danger of annihilation:

> And so, to abandon God and to exist in oneself, that is to please oneself, is not immediately to lose all being; but it is to come nearer to nothingness.(35)

Lovelace's penultimate letter to Belford expresses the sense of futility to which all his contrivances and machinations have finally brought him, and contains the admission that those same plots, undertaken for the sake of ensnaring Clarissa, were totally ineffectual. The letter conveys a mood of emotional and spiritual exhaustion, as if the only result of all that activity to secure his own dominion and self-exaltation has been to bring him closer to the negativity at the heart of one who has substituted worship of self for the worship of God. Moreover, his letter carries an implicit acknowledgement that Clarissa's construction of pride, the pride which is 'above doing a base or a dishonourable action', has triumphed over Lovelace's own sinful pride, which would perform any base action to achieve its end of self-exaltation:

> Now and then, indeed, am I capable of a gleam of comfort, arising (not ungenerously) from the moral certainty which I have of her everlasting happiness, in spite of all the machinations and devices which I set on foot to ensnare her virtue, and to bring down so pure a mind to my own level.(p.1483)

However, self-deceived to the end, and still clinging to that self-image which has lost all value, Lovelace must still add 'not ungenerously'. All his effort and contrivances, his boasted joy in mischief, his pride in the manipulation of others, have brought him to nothing but failure and futility in this life, and hardly hold out any prospect of the everlasting happiness, which he is convinced Clarissa enjoys, in

the next. Such an outcome, according to Thomas à Kempis, is only what he should expect. He has Christ say:

> But whoever desires to glory in anything outside Me, or to delight in some personal good thing, will not be established in true joy, nor uplifted in heart, but will be hindered and frustrated in countless ways.(36)

Lovelace has made 'a perverse kind of exaltation' his 'good thing', and has gloried in the flattering but false self-image of himself as the greatest conqueror in the world' at the expense of the lives and souls of others. It can only be an instance of God's justice if in so doing, he has brought himself to the prospect of Hell. Certainly in this life, he has already encountered the frustration and loss of joy of which à Kempis speaks.

9

The Four Last Things – The Sinner

Richardson's treatment of death accepts orthodox Christian eschatology and presents formal examples of both holy and unholy departures. The latter are as important to his scheme as the former, and the significance of Clarissa's own death cannot be fully appreciated unless it is considered in relation to the less edifying departures also described in the novel. Richardson himself remarked that he had intended that his readers should be struck by the Christian triumph of her passing in contrast to the pitiful exit which he had given to Lovelace.(1)

Of the four deaths which feature so prominently in the latter half of the novel, only that of Clarissa offers to the reader a description of a passing in which death is certain to be followed by salvation and eternal happiness, while he may conclude that salvation is denied to Mrs. Sinclair and doubtful, if still possible, for Belton. The death of Lovelace is the most painful and the most enigmatic of exits among those of the sinners, since it seems that Richardson intended almost certain damnation for his anti-hero, yet presents him as possibly being favoured with a vision of Clarissa as he dies. It may be that since this vision is reminiscent of the dream which Lovelace once had of Clarissa's apotheosis and his own descent into a pit, the reader may perhaps infer that part of Lovelace's punishment may be eternal separation from the woman he has loved and injured.

Even more problematic than the death of Lovelace is that of Clarissa herself. Whatever Richardson's intention, which seems to have been, on the evidence of the

letter cited above, to offer to his readers the edifying spectacle of a saint on the point of gaining the heavenly reward promised to the faithful servants of God, no reader can fail to be aware of the complexities in the treatment of the death of this saint. These complexities complicate and puzzle the reader's response, but offer him a far richer experience in his reading of the novel.

It is clear that these four deaths form a pattern which, taken as a whole, demonstrates Richardson's eschatological design. The reader is present at four deathbeds, three of them described vividly by Belford. The two women are diametrically opposed, both in character and in attitude to death and ultimate destination; the obvious saint stands in formal opposition to the near fiend. Of the two men, both profligates with a similar tally of sins to their account, the less intelligent, attractive and successful dies in fear and horror. However, for this sinner there is a faint hope of salvation in a doubtful and tardy repentance which may commend him to the mercy of God, a mercy which Richardson appears to be telling his readers is yet accessible to all those who will turn, imperfectly but finally, in search of it.

The reader is thus prepared for the death of Lovelace, who, with every personal and material advantage in life, is superior in every other way to his fellow-rake but this one, that he does not at the end seek that Divine mercy. The comparative quietness of his death only serves to suggest to the reader that here is an experience far more terrifying than the harrowing deaths of the other two sinners; the man whose intellect far surpasses theirs, does not seem able to grasp – or to care to grasp – what they finally do in their terror realize, that judgement is not merely a theoretical possibility, but an imminent event. It may be that his despair is so

profound that he does not care. Either way, he is further from salvation than the man only doubtfully saved, and the woman assuredly damned.

From the earliest times, Christian theology has asserted that death is the penalty and result of the fall. St. Augustine tells us:

> For God did not create men in the same condition as the angels, completely incapable of death, even if they sinned. The condition of human beings was such that if they continued in perfect obedience they would be granted the immortality of the angels and an eternity of bliss, without the interposition of death whereas if disobedient they would be justly condemned to the punishment of death.(2)

No theologian questioned such an account of the origin of death; the problem posed for the Christian, a problem which Richardson addresses in his work, is how best to prepare for death, and how to meet it when it comes so as to enter once again into that union with God of which man's fall had deprived him. Since the fall had left man spiritually weakened and so pitiably liable to sin and sin again, the prospect of attaining that union demanded unremitting struggle and endless repentances for endless sins, themselves the inevitable result of an impaired nature. Because of this, Christian commentators from the earliest times urged those who aspired to salvation to prepare for death by living in the constant recognition, not only of its inevitability, but also of the inevitability of judgement to follow. Thomas à Kempis reminds us:

> If you are not ready to die today, will tomorrow find you better prepared?
>
> Happy and wise is he who endeavours to be during his life as he wishes to be found at his death.(3)

Richardson's sinners do not exhibit this kind of wisdom, and are shown, finally, to be very unhappy indeed. If he presents in the death of Clarissa an example of the perfect Christian passage from life to death, and from death to triumph, he reinforces his lesson as to the necessity of gaining such wisdom as she exhibits, by a

vivid presentation of what death can be when the dying are deprived of that confidence and hope which is the reward of penitence, faith and virtue. The Christian must so far overcome the failings of his fallen nature as to be able to cry out with Bunyan:

> Though I was before afraid to think of a dying hour, yet now I cried, Let me die; now death was lovely and beautiful in my sight, for I saw we shall never live indeed till we be gone to the other world; O methought this life is but a slumber in comparison of that above: … God himself is the portion of the saints.(4)

This is the experience of the dying Clarissa, but what if the consciousness of sin, and a hardness of heart that makes repentance difficult, renders the very idea of dissolution hideous? The process of dying then takes on the quality of a nightmare, which the sinner knows can only conclude in a further and unending nightmare unimaginably horrible. This is the experience of two of Richardson's sinners, and he spares no pains to demonstrate that hell is the portion of such unfortunates, and that for such as these, hell begins here on earth.

It might be considered excessive to oppose to the account of Clarissa's perfect Christian death not one but three descriptions of the harrowing deaths of such sinners, but each of these three latter exits comments on her death in their several and differing ways. The squalor and disorder of Mrs. Sinclair's death-bed contrasts with the calm serenity of Clarissa's passing, while Lovelace's death, almost as quiet as hers, suggests that a sinner who has barely come to comprehend what true repentance is, may die hardly even aware of the joys of the Kingdom; he keenly feels the loss of Clarissa, but not of the God on whom her heart and mind are fixed.

If Lovelace's death represents that of those who become insensitive to the state of their souls – and it is never the state of his soul which troubles Lovelace – Belton's death comments on that of Clarissa because it is that of a man who, unlike

her, does not understand the vital importance of repentance until it is too late to have any reasonable assurance of salvation. Such men must pass their last moments in ignorance as to whether a late and imperfect repentance has been accepted. It is not an easy way to die; the natural fear that any man may experience in the face of death is heightened in Belton to a pitiful state of terror, and the reader is as unable as Belton is himself to feel any firm conviction that his salvation is assured. To die in such uncertainty is almost as terrible as to die convinced of damnation. As for Mrs. Sinclair, the reader may only conclude that this is the way in which the self-damned die,(p.1389) and Richardson's presentation of the event is designed to make any reader determine to do otherwise when his own time comes.

Richardson's sinners have all signally failed to make appropriate preparation for death by the manner of their lives. Belton has wasted his life in the gratification of his senses and in acts of violence, and only on his deathbed does he wish that he could be spared to live a little longer so that he might repair this situation. He is conscious that it is judgement rather than death itself he needs to fear, and that he can recall no good deeds to support him when he comes to his account.(p.1225) His state indicates the misery that a sinner may experience in awakening, too late, to the recognition that he must account for his life. Habitual vice has weakened him, both physically and spiritually, to such an extent that repentance is all the more difficult.(5) Moreover, since his anguish arises more from the fear of hell than sorrow at offending God and from love of Him, he is unlikely to arrive at an effective repentance.(6)

The consciousness of his desperate situation leads him to fall into a state of despair, a state which is recognized as sinful in itself in Christian theology.(7) Belton thus compounds his sins, and renders his condition yet more dangerous. His state

amply illustrates the dangers of a delayed repentance, for as Christian commentators have frequently pointed out, repentance can never be safely delayed, but should be a constant state of mind.(8) Belton's despair leads to a fear of accepting the ministrations of the clergy, and to a wish that death might lead only to annihilation, both ways of expressing a futile denial of the approaching event, and a wish often expressed, in both fiction and in devotional literature, by the dying sinner.(9) However, Belford reflects that since God is merciful, and Belton wished to repent, he may yet be saved, despite the terrors of a deathbed in which the consciousness of hitherto unrepented sins has made effective repentance difficult.(p.1243) Belford's presence at such a painful deathbed leads him to reflect upon his own situation, and brings him to a determination to reform, a resolution he recommends to Lovelace.(p.1243) The reader of Richardson's novel is surely intended to take the warning; the recipient of Belford's letter in which the advice is conveyed, Lovelace, never does.

Belford's resolution is confirmed by his attendance on Mrs. Sinclair's deathbed, although he is not present at the moment of her passing. If Belton's death is a warning to young men to undertake a timely repentance in their youth, that of Mrs. Sinclair offers a similar warning to women not to allow themselves to be corrupted, if when they come to die, they wish to do so in the confidence of salvation. In every respect, her deathbed contrasts with that of Clarissa, just as her adherence to vice is opposed to Clarissa's steadfast virtue. Like Belton, Mrs. Sinclair claims that she has no time to repent, but unlike him, she makes no motion at all towards repentance itself. Her condition demonstrates that a life of consistent vice leads to such a graceless state that repentance is virtually impossible to achieve.(p.1389)

She cannot accept that she must die, and attempts to bribe God with hollow promises of reform.(p.1392) However, her defiant and blasphemous attitude suggests that such promises do not mean that she is repentant, only that she is afraid. Fear of death, as both Jeremy Taylor and Richardson suggest,(10) does not equate with effective repentance. Mrs. Sinclair's refusal to die is shown to be futile and a sin against the dispositions of Divine Providence. She fails to show the patience which Christian commentators recommend as indispensable to a Christian submission to the will of God. In this respect, as in many others, her behaviour contrasts with the patience and submission to the Divine will exhibited by Clarissa. Resentment makes her passing hideous, and her complaints against her doctors and household stand in contrast to the exquisite courtesy with which Clarissa behaves towards those who attend her deathbed.(11) Like Belton, Mrs. Sinclair fears to accept the ministrations of the church, which Jeremy Taylor in particular, recommends as indispensable to assist the dying to repentance, and never receives a visit from a clergyman. Nor does she undertake the one duty which the sick can perform, which is to pray.(12) She thus deprives herself of all spiritual comfort and of any chance of salvation.

Her situation leads Belford once more to reflect on the need for grace in order for a sinner to effect reformation. The 'editor' of Clarissa adds in a perfunctory note that Mrs. Sinclair's deathbed was extended for eleven days, but we are not told that in all that time she showed the least sign of repentance, nor does Belford's account record any such gesture on her part. It seems as if Richardson's reader is meant to conclude that her heart has been so hardened by sin that she has put herself beyond the reach of grace, or that during the eleven days of dying, she has resisted the final promptings, extended to her through the agency of Belford who urges repentance, to seek mercy. She claimed to have no time to repent; her extended agonies allowed

time of which she did not avail herself.(p.1394) Lovelace, too, will be given time and fail to use it.

Mrs. Sinclair's deathbed presents the bleak and terrifying mirror-image to that of Clarissa, and Belford, passing from one to the other, witnesses and conveys to his reader and to Richardson's, the diametrically opposed experiences and attitudes of saint and sinner, which reflect, as at least one commentator has not failed to point out, the devotional literature widely read at the time.(13) However, underlying the prescriptions of such devotional works, as to how the individual should face death, were the contentions, established over centuries of Christian belief, as to how he should live, in accordance both with God and with his own nature. For Belford's reader, Lovelace, the descriptions of these contrasting deathbeds should take on a particular meaning; these are the respective ultimate fates of those women who resist, and of those who yield, to such as he. Belford writes of his own reflective mood:

> When I see in Miss Harlowe how all human excellence, and in poor Belton how all inhuman libertinism, and am near seeing in this abandoned woman how all diabolical profligateness, end.(pp.1393-1394)

His remark suggests that his author, Richardson, sees virtue to be in accordance with the essential nature of man when man is in accordance with the divine law, that is, when man acts reasonably, and that conversely, vice and sin are essentially unreasonable since they are opposed to that same law. Belford's wish that Lovelace might also have seen the same sights, so as to benefit from their instruction, is quite ineffective. Of all the deaths in the novel, that of Lovelace, quiet though it is, offers the most painful spectacle and provides the conclusion to Richardson's most searching analysis of the way in which a man may choose to be damned. It is also as problematic in its way as that of Clarissa herself.

Christian theology has always asserted that preparation for death should be life-long by means of the practice of virtue and the awareness of judgement. Lovelace has not prepared himself for death, but he has most assiduously prepared himself for damnation. That Richardson intended his readers to recognize that Lovelace dies in danger of damnation is clear on the evidence of his letters, and of his remarks on the subject in the Postscript to Clarissa. In a letter to Edward Moore, he comments on Lovelace's death:

> Yet how deplorably impious, hardly thinks of invoking the highest assistance and mercy! - ... Have I not then given a dreadful rather than a hopeful Exit, with respect to Futurity, to the unhappy Lovelace![14]

He points out that Lovelace's death was intended as a contrast to the triumphant departure of Clarissa, while in his conclusion to the novel, he makes it clear that Lovelace had been unprepared for death, leaving his family 'apprehensive with regard to his future happiness'. In the Postscript, he asks his readers:

> Is not Mr. *Lovelace*, who could persevere in his villainous views, against the strongest and most frequent convictions and remorses that ever were sent to awaken and reclaim a wicked man – is not this great, this wilful transgressor, condignly *punished*.[p.1498]

The difficulty for those readers is that Richardson's remarks in both instances do not categorically consign Lovelace to damnation, and his condign punishment might be interpreted as the loss of Clarissa and the final futility of his life. Richardson's scheme would seem to demand Lovelace's damnation as an appropriate fate in opposition to the triumph of his heroine, but to insist on too schematic a treatment might well shock the susceptibilities of readers who have found themselves engaged with Lovelace on an imaginative level. In theological terms, to leave no room for doubt might likewise comment too presumptuously on the unsearchable

mercy of God. It may be said that Lovelace's damnation seems probable, but not inevitable.

Lovelace admits himself a believer and accepts the doctrine of rewards and punishments, but he eventually goes to his death with no apparent concern as to the destination of his soul. The reader may be appalled at such lack of concern, or may salute his courage in such circumstances, but must recognize, as Richardson intended that he should, that the courage is here misapplied. However, the fact that Lovelace is courageous points to a problem for the reader, which created a problem for an author who sought to control his reader's response. Lovelace is not drawn as being entirely abandoned in the way that Mrs. Sinclair is presented as such. He has qualities, as Richardson himself pointed out,(15) which are admirable, but these are often vitiated by pride or by his inability to maintain a fixed determination on virtue.

Richardson has given Lovelace a capacity for goodness and has made it his tragedy that he chooses to destroy it in himself. Just as Clarissa does not become a saint because she is, as she is frequently called, 'an angel', but because she is a human being who must struggle with the failings of fallen human nature, so Lovelace is not, as he is so often called, 'a devil', but a human being who fails in that struggle and makes himself a 'worse man'.(16) Elsewhere, Richardson declares that reformation requires a good heart 'properly touched by the divine Finger'.(17) Lovelace is offered – and rejects – time after time, grace and the opportunity to repent. As Richardson himself points out, Lovelace chooses his path 'against the strongest and most frequent convictions and remorses'.

This process is painfully illustrated in Lovelace's progress towards death and judgement. He can turn with fervour to Clarissa and ask her to 'mould me as you please', and abase himself, telling her that she is born to save his soul.(ii, p.80) Both the

reader and Clarissa must be disturbed by this sudden intensity, but while it lasts, Lovelace is in earnest. He can be surprised by the sudden softening of his heart towards Clarissa and tell Belford with all apparent sincerity:

> I had not, at the instant, any thoughts but what reverence inspired. And till she had actually withdrawn ... all the motions of my heart were as pure as her own.(p.646)

However, the motions of his heart cannot retain their purity, since within a few minutes, he is speculating on his chances of surprising Clarissa by night, as his attempts by day have met with so little success. He seems, however, in a half-conscious manner, to recognize that to yield to such impulses of pity and tenderness would be his salvation. Moved by the pathos of Clarissa's tears at her 'fatherless' state, he questions:

> What's the matter with me! – Whence this dew-drop! – a tear! – as I hope to be saved, it is a tear, Jack!(p.709)

It is never easy to ascertain whether Lovelace is sincere or not, or whether he is merely trying out yet another of his personae,(18) but the use of the conventional phrase here, 'as I hope to be saved', at such a moment, even uttered carelessly, does indicate a way in which he could be saved. The tears do not, however, lead him to repentance but only to a literary reference which he uses to distract his own attention from the present reality of being in danger of finding a self in which pity might lead to reformation. Instead he withdraws to continue plotting to deceive Clarissa with the false possibility of a reconciliation with her family. Even after the rape, when Lovelace has seen the effects of her suffering on the woman he claims to love, he continues in this pattern of rejecting the impulse towards an acknowledgement of his sins and towards repentance.

> Well, but, after all (how many *after-alls* have I?), I could be very grave, were I to give way to it --the devil take me for a fool!

> What's the matter with me, I wonder! – I must breathe fresher air for a few days.(p.887)

Lovelace may feel that it would be foolish to give way to such an impulse towards seriousness, but Richardson appears to be indicating to the reader the notion that the devil will indeed take Lovelace for a fool who did not allow himself to recognize his own best interests, but acted with a fatal perversity.

The question must be asked why a man of such intelligence, who is capable of tears of pity and of reverence for virtue, and who has moments when he appears to be visited by Divine promptings towards repentance, should be unable to sustain such impulses. It is not through ignorance of Christian doctrine that he fails. Richardson shows that Lovelace, even at his moments of failure, is aware of what the work of grace is, and that religion is the expression of reason. He admits, when he accompanies Clarissa to church, that he has been impressed by the service, and that the act of worship is 'an exercise worthy of a sentient being', adding that if he regularly attended church, he could not pursue his designs on Clarissa.(p.540)

Lovelace may be seen here recognizing the vital support of religion in assisting man towards a virtuous life, but also simultaneously rejecting such assistance in favour of carnal interests, since he concludes his account of his visit to church by adding that his attention there was fixed on Clarissa. Time and again, Lovelace rejects such proffered grace; even when he is forced to recognize that grace has operated, momentarily, in his heart, he does not, or cannot sustain the desire for virtue which it inspires in him.

He shows himself equally aware that for such sins as he commits, a judgement awaits. Faced with a Clarissa, who so far from being cowed and broken by his assault upon her, is majestic in the scorn and dignity of her innocence, he finds in the encounter a premonition of another occasion to come:

> By my soul, Belford, my whole frame was shaken: for not only her looks, and her action, but her voice, so solemn, was inexpressibly affecting: and then my cursed guilt, and her innocence and merit, and rank, and superiority of talents, all stared me at that instant in the face so formidably, that my present account, to which she unexpectedly called me, seemed, as I then thought, to resemble that general one to which we are told we shall be summoned, when our conscience shall be our accuser.(pp.899-900)

These are not the words of a man who is ignorant of the doctrine of rewards and punishments, nor of one who disbelieves that doctrine. If Lovelace is so disturbed by his consciousness of guilt before Clarissa, why does he not consider what it will be like, with that same consciousness, to face the infinite power and awesome majesty of an offended God? It seems to be a consideration from which he withdraws his mind. The warnings implicit in Belton's hideous death, and explicit in Belford's reflections on the unhappy man's terror of judgement have no effect. 'But thy heavy sermon shall not affect me too much neither', he tells Belford, who is urging him to repentance for fear of judgement.(p.1239) Only when he must contemplate the imminent death of Clarissa does he begin to think of damnation in relation to himself. 'Is not damnation likely to be the purchase to me, though a happy eternity will be hers?' he asks.(p.1358) But this is a question which is not answered by any attempt to avoid such a fate.

Lovelace then, aware of the doctrine of rewards and punishments, aware that judgement awaits the sinner, yet goes to his death without any formal acknowledgement of repentance. If both Belford and the reader might hope for some expression of repentance even at the last, they must be disappointed. They must also be disturbed by what appears to be a misunderstanding on Lovelace's part of the redemptive power of suffering:

> I never was such a fool as to disbelieve a Providence: yet am I not for resolving into judgements everything that temporarily chances to bear an avenging face. Yet if we must be punished either here or

> hereafter for our misdeeds, better *here* say I, than *hereafter*. Have I not then an interest to think my punishment not only begun, but completed; since what I have suffered, and do suffer, passes all description? ...
>
> When, oh when, shall I know a joyful hour?(p.1428)

Such words cannot be read without exciting compassion, but they must also provoke disquiet. Lovelace's suffering cannot be doubted, and suffering can indeed atone for sin, but it must be humbly accepted for that purpose, and the sufferer must not question Divine dispositions, nor decide for himself when atonement has been made. Moreover, suffering is not a reparation in itself; it may be sanctified if accompanied by penitence and consciously offered to God in atonement. A man who suffers in this way, taking the opportunity offered by God to make atonement in this life rather than in the next, would hardly be looking for joyful hours, but would be resolved to bear his affliction patiently. Nor would he be about, as Lovelace is here, to engage in an encounter which must almost certainly result either in the death of his opponent, or send his own unprepared soul on its way, divorced from his body in a manner which precludes the possibility of repentance.

When St. Augustine addresses the question of redemptive suffering, he points out that God does not always inflict suffering as punishment in this life, but reserves some for the last judgement. He adds:

> The violence which assails good men to test them, to cleanse and purify them, effects in the wicked their condemnation, ruin and annihilation. Thus the wicked, under pressure of affliction, execrate God and blaspheme; the good, in the same affliction, offer up prayers and praises.(19)

Lovelace does not blaspheme, but he does not undertake the reformation and restitution, where possible, which would be required for any repentance to be considered effective. Although his words, quoted above, show an understanding of the redemptive power of suffering as an instrument of repentance, they also reveal

that he has again failed to grasp an opportunity which has been offered to him. What is lacking is patient submission to God's dispositions and a change of heart.

How Lovelace has arrived at this point, when he can write of the redemptive power of suffering to mitigate punishment hereafter, and yet intend knowingly to commit further sin by means of a duel, is suggested by a gradual process of hardening and insensitivity to conscience. Time and again, Richardson shows him, despite his awareness of the doctrines of grace and judgement, stifling his conscience, and has left the reader in no doubt but that Lovelace undertakes this process in the full knowledge of what he does. Torn between 'contemplating her perfections', and his wounded pride that such perfections make Clarissa superior to himself, he rejects his better impulses of awe and reverence which he feels for her by arraigning his conscience as a 'lurking varletess', and a 'troublesome bosom-visitor'.[(p.658)] Such terms hardly square with the conviction of Christian theology that conscience is a God-given faculty which guides and counsels man to his eternal benefit. Conscience, says Aquinas, is:

> The activity of consciously applying our knowledge to what we do: witnessing to what we do and don't do, legislating about what we should and shouldn't do, and defending and accusing us when we have or haven't done well.[(20)]

Lovelace is aware that he has done badly in relation to Clarissa. He knows that his way of life opposes the tenets of Christianity, but he actively seeks to kill the inconvenient conscience whose promptings could save him from judgement. His description of the 'murder' of this God-given faculty is expressed in a colourful, even a theatrical manner, but the humour he intends for the amusement of Belford, hides the grim and sordid reality of his intentions towards Clarissa – to deceive her further and to resort to rape – and the mortal effects of this 'murder' on his own soul. There

is a certain hysterical edge to his account, as if the reader might here perceive a man desperately impelling himself to an act he knows to be wrong:

> Had I not given thee thy death's wound, thou wouldst have robbed me of all my joys. Thou couldst not have mended me, 'tis plain. Thou couldst only have thrown me into despair. Didst thou not see that I had gone too far to recede? – Welter on, once more I bid thee! - Gasp on! - *That* thy last gasp surely! - How hard diest thou! – ADIEU! - 'tis kind in thee, however, to bid me *Adieu*! Adieu, Adieu, Adieu, to thee, Oh thou inflexible, and till now, unconquerable bosom-intruder – Adieu to thee forever![p.848]

It is a mistake on Lovelace's part to claim that he has gone too far to recede, or to assert that his conscience could not amend him; it could if he would allow it to do so. But as his manipulative letter to Joseph Leman in the third edition makes clear, Lovelace regards any positive response to conscience as a weakness.[ii. p.150] However, his conscience is not so easily killed, despite his vehemence here, since after the rape, he is to be found coolly preparing to ignore its promptings in favour of allowing Mrs. Sinclair's 'daughters' to 'break' Clarissa:

> I am still resolved upon matrimony, if my fair perverse one will accept of me. But if she will not – why then I must give an uninterrupted hearing, not to my conscience, but to these women below.[p.942]

This considered comment is far more horrifying, both for what it indicates as to the poor prospects of Clarissa's safety at Lovelace's hands, and as an indication of the increasing depravity of his soul, than the earlier, theatrical account of the murder of his conscience. Lovelace appears to be increasingly hardened, and if he is to face death and judgement with any hope of salvation, only a settled repentance confirmed by mortification will avail him. However, as an examination of his inability to sustain his better impulses, and his misunderstanding of the manner in which suffering must be accepted, have demonstrated, he becomes increasingly unlikely to secure this hope. 'No-one is worthy of heavenly comfort', says Thomas à Kempis,

'Unless they have diligently exercised themselves in holy contrition'.(21) Lovelace does not appear to understand what holy contrition is, nor the part played by conscience in achieving it. Repentance, for Lovelace, is to be undertaken in age: 'It is time enough when I am old and joyless to enlarge upon this topic'.(p.865) But he will never reach such a point, and Richardson offers a stark comment, in his bringing Lovelace to an early death, on the folly of such expectations.(22)

Lovelace is never quite prepared to face the full responsibility for the sinfulness of his acts. He can never accept that repentance makes demands on the sinner. In this respect, his attitude is consistent both before and after Clarissa's death. Instead of allowing the suffering he experiences to remain with him as a healing power and an expiation to be offered to God, he attempts to evade it. After the rape, spying on the sleeping Clarissa, he reflects on his own guilty sleeplessness:

> As every vice generally brings on its own punishment, even in *this* life, if anything were to tempt me to doubt of *future* punishment, it would be that there can hardly be a greater than that which I at this instant experience in my own remorse.
>
> I hope it will go off ... (p.904)

That Lovelace is not prepared to accept the suffering that his sins have brought upon him is demonstrated in his wish that his misery will recede. Likewise, shaken by his brush with madness after Clarissa's death, he drives from his mind the full acknowledgement of sin which would initiate the process of repentance and reform:

> I *must*, I *will*, I have *already* overcome these fruitless gloominesses. Every hour my constitution rises stronger and stronger to befriend me; and, except a tributary sigh now and then to the memory of my heart's beloved, it gives me hope that I shall quickly

> be what I was – life, spirit, gaiety, and once more the plague of a sex that has been my plague … (p.1432)

It is impossible not to feel compassion for this man who strives to avoid the reflections that he fears will make him mad, but these same reflections would lead to repentance, and he rejects them. Jeremy Taylor asserted that there was 'but one repentance in a man's whole life, if repentance be taken in the proper and strict Evangelical Covenant-sense'. That repentance would 'change our whole state of life', and the sinner would move from the state of sin to the state of grace.(23) So far from recognizing with Jeremy Taylor that a man needs to be *changed* by repentance if he is to achieve his salvation, Lovelace seeks to remain what he once was, and hopes for nothing other than to resume his old, rakish persona of the irresistible seducer of numberless women. So far from being life and spirit, he is therefore set on the course of the spiritually dead. If he cannot begin to acknowledge that this persona needs to be discarded, and maintains it in despite of the better impulses of a heart not entirely impermeable to the stings of conscience, he is in a fair way to deny himself mercy.

Part of his difficulty in acknowledging his sins and repenting of them arises from his habit of seeking to shift to others, even to his victim, the responsibility for what he does. He always finds someone else to blame, either the 'accursed Circes' of Mrs. Sinclair's house, who urge him on,(pp.971-972) or the Harlowes as the chief cause of Clarissa's fate, ignoring his own part in manipulating them,(p.1384) or Clarissa herself. 'This dear creature will not *let me be good*!' he complains to Belford when Clarissa seeks to elude him by making an ally of Dorcas.(p.917) He argues that death is not a natural consequence of rape, and that the 'sweet miser would break her heart, and die; and how could I help it'?(p.1439) Even when confronted with the dignified and resolute resentment of Clarissa in their interview after the rape, and disconcerted by

the composure of the woman whom he knows he has wronged, Lovelace cannot quite admit responsibility for what he has done, and can only stammer:

> What – what a - what – has been done – I, – I, – I – cannot but say – must own – must confess – hem – hem – is not right – is not what should have been – But - a – but – but – I am truly – truly – sorry for it - .(p.901)

Lovelace's use of the passive voice indicates at once his shame and his reluctance to acknowledge fully, even as the woman he has raped stands before him, the sin he has committed. Richardson's presentation of his confusion and shame here is convincing – Lovelace is not represented as being unmoved by his own act – but it also conveys that weakness in him which always fails, finally, to follow any recognition of sin with appropriate behaviour. Clarissa, it is true, will not allow Lovelace to make her amends in the eyes of the world, and Richardson himself elsewhere declares that such reparation could never be adequate.(24) However, Lovelace's duty is also to make amends to God, and that is something he never attempts to do, and something he cannot do, while he disclaims the full responsibility for his sins. Thomas à Kempis puts the matter simply and clearly when he questions God:

> Why do You demand of a guilty and wretched sinner that he repent and humble himself for his offences? It is because in true penitence and humbleness of heart is born the hope of pardon; the troubled conscience is reconciled; lost grace restored; man is spared the anger of God; while God and the penitent soul greet each other in a holy embrace.(25)

But humbling himself is what Lovelace does not do. His troubled conscience can never be reconciled because he refuses to allow its promptings to have any effect on him. That Richardson recognized the difficulties of repentance for a character such as he creates in Lovelace and intended that he should stand accountable at

Judgement for the choices he makes, may be inferred from a letter to Lady Bradshaigh:

> Indeed, indeed, Madam, Reformation is not, can not, be an easy, a sudden thing in a Man long immersed in Vice – the Temptations to it, as from Sex to Sex, so natural; constitution, as in such a Character as Lovelace, so promotive, a Love of Intrigue so predominant – So great a self-admirer – so supposedly admired by others - [(26)]

He adds later that Lovelace is 'wicked upon Principle'. Grace is not easily accessible to such a man; Lovelace himself agrees with Belford that 'we cannot repent when we will', and continues:

> For, in my lucid intervals I made good resolutions. But, as health turned its blithe side towards me, and opened my prospects of recovery, all my old inclinations and appetites returned; and this letter, perhaps, will be a thorough conviction to thee that I *am* as wild a fellow as ever, or in the way to be so.[(p.1440)]

The hint of self-congratulation at the conclusion of these remarks suggests a second reason for Lovelace's failure to repent, a reason which is in keeping with Richardson's own remark about Lovelace being 'so great a self-admirer – so supposedly admired by others'. A careful reading of Lovelace's frequent self-analyses, when he describes to Belford the recurring impulses towards virtue that he experiences and rejects, demonstrates the reason why, despite his knowledge of Christian doctrine, his admiration and at times, his reverence for Clarissa's virtue, and those very impulses themselves, he always slides back to sin in the form of further lies and deceptions, and why he rapes a woman whom he does love as far as in him lies.

'By my soul ... this sweet creature will at last undo me!', he comments to Belford when Clarissa's misery at her father's curse nearly reduces him to tears.[(p.651)] What Lovelace fears is that he will always be 'undone' by such responses; he will lose sight of the persona he himself loves, and which he presents to be admired by the

world he claims as his own. In that world, he is a conqueror, fit to be a prince, an emperor. Time and again, Lovelace expresses a response to his better impulses in such terms:

> Faith, Jack, thou hadst half-undone me with thy nonsense, though I would not own it in my yesterday's letter; my conscience of thy party before. But I think I am my own man again.(p.721)

Belford had urged Lovelace to abandon his designs on Clarissa. To be his 'own man' Lovelace must suppress both his conscience and the promptings of his better impulses in favour of maintaining his self-image. However, he does not do so without conflict; the man he could be, if he yielded to those better impulses, is always opposed by the man he desires to be in the eyes of the world and in his own. He makes such strenuous efforts to be the latter that he seems to make as hard a task of his own damnation as others might do of securing salvation. Lovelace experiences his better impulses as a threat to his 'self'. 'If I now recede, I am gone forever', he reflects as Clarissa begs to be spared what he intends for her (which, at this point, is rape).(p.881) Lovelace's choice of his constructed self in every instance ensures that he *will* finally be undone, his salvation probably lost rather than that self.

He sees in Clarissa what he fears and envies, 'The God within her',(p.853) which exalts her and reveals to him the essential shoddiness of the persona he has chosen, and the consciousness of the attraction which such virtue has for him threatens the security of his 'self'. In relation to Clarissa, the threat expresses itself as a fear of a capitulation which will annihilate that self-image, 'For shall I not be *hers*, and not *my own*?'.(p.734) Mark Kinkead-Weekes's analysis of Lovelace notes his fear of losing the Lovelace he wishes to be, the self-image he has created, by such a capitulation, and makes the interesting point that he destroys Clarissa rather than lose 'his imperial idea of himself'. However, in Christian terms, his refusal to abandon

that self-image has even more painful effects on *himself*, since it destroys him, body and soul. In those terms, Lovelace's tragedy is not merely, as this most perceptive commentator claims, that of human waste brought on by himself, but the compromise of an immortal soul, and the likely loss of the goal for which man was created.(27)

Clarissa is brought to recognize the pride which has exposed her to the power of Lovelace. He is not prepared to acknowledge the pride on which his favoured self-image is based, and the sins which result from maintaining it at all costs. When his crisis comes, he chooses as he has always chosen, the survival of his 'self'. What he does, therefore, in his crisis is to begin a painful reconstruction of his 'self', while admitting that the reflections on his own culpability that he finds so disturbing and has decided to drive away, might have been his salvation: Lovelace cannot afford to take the risk of giving them room. Fearing that his mind is affected, he concludes:

> Once touched, therefore, I must endeavour to abandon these gloomy reflections, which might *otherwise* have brought on the right turn of mind.(p.1431)

There could be no clearer statement of the rejection of a painful acknowledgement of sin, a rejection which precludes both repentance and amendment. Had Lovelace been able to achieve these states by means of the 'gloomy reflections' which he rejected so fiercely, and which might have brought about the 'right turn of mind', he would not have embarked on his final, futile journey of amusement which would bring him neither satisfaction nor relief, and which would be a prelude to his early death. Lovelace cannot journey away from his own heart, and its better impulses, which he has rejected, have marked the moments when grace was offered. 'It is not to be expected', says Richardson in the Collection, 'that offended grace should repeatedly offer itself to a wilful transgressor.'(28)

Lovelace's reflection that 'we cannot repent when we will', may well suggest his underlying conviction that he has not only lost his happiness in this life, but probably forfeited his chance of happiness in the next. As far as this life is concerned, nothing gives him pleasure or satisfaction. Among all the diversions of foreign courts, he can think 'of nothing, nor of anybody with delight, but of my CLARISSA':

> What greater punishment, than to have these astonishing perfections, which she was mistress of, strike my remembrance with such force, when I have nothing left but the remorse of having deprived myself and the world of such a blessing?(p.1483)

Since he gains comfort only from his conviction that Clarissa enjoys everlasting happiness, he cannot fail to be aware of the everlasting misery which awaits an unrepentant sinner. Richardson shows his anti-hero offered, even at this point, one last chance to avoid such a fate for himself. Lovelace writes that he is so miserable abroad, that he will return to England and follow Belford's example, 'and see what a constant course of penitence and mortification will do for me'. He adds, 'There is no living at this rate – d-n me if there be!'.(p.1483) Lovelace has again unconsciously predicted his fate, and the use of the conventional curse may well be seen as a half-conscious recognition that such a life as he has lived, and continues to lead, without repentance, does actually lead to damnation.

Richardson's concern is with an examination of how one soul triumphs while another may sustain the tragedy of loss. Such moments in the novel demonstrate the inexorable logic of the tragedy he presents and shapes. He has shown Lovelace rejecting every impulse towards virtue, and his anti-hero's final rejection or failure to respond to the ultimate offer of grace is consistent both with psychological verisimilitude and with the Christian contention that habitual vice

hardens the heart and may finally – probably will – put the sinner beyond the reach of grace. Thus Richardson presents Lovelace's inexorable process towards unrepentant death. Immediately following his remarks about a possible repentance, his next words indicate his determination to pursue his quarrel with Morden. Moreover, he resumes his accustomed persona. He cannot allow even Belford, or himself, to entertain a moment's doubt of its validity, but remarks:

> Most cheerfully do I go to meet the colonel; and I would tear my heart out of my breast with my own hands, were it capable of fear or concern on that account.(p.1484)

Belford is unlikely to doubt Lovelace's physical courage, and does not need to do so. Lovelace has not recognized that acknowledging sin and undertaking repentance does not render a man less brave physically, but only proves him courageous morally. Yet Lovelace, knowing as he does the state of his soul, aware that repentance is required for forgiveness to operate, continues on his course, prepared to commit what is in truth a murder or to expose himself to an unprepared death. He admits his reluctance to kill Morden, but does not decline meeting him, and his plea that he will think of repenting hereafter, carries an irony in that for him there will be no hereafter in this world in which to repent. No-one can knowingly commit a sin, Christian doctrine assures us, pleading that he will repent for it afterwards; choice is here and now.(29) Christian doctrine also makes clear the value of the human person, whether that of the self or of another:

> Man is both the image of God and our flesh. Wherefore, if we would not violate the image of God, we must hold the person of man sacred – if we would not divest ourselves of humanity, we must cherish our own flesh.(30)

Lovelace has never held the persons of others sacred, and does not do so now. He has not cherished his own flesh, but abused it by sin, and put it at risk for a false notion of honour. Richardson shows him to be consistent in continuing to do so. The

letter he receives from Clarissa after her death, urges a repentance which would preclude any such undertaking as a duel, and has warned him of his 'hardened insensibility'. It is this insensibility which now allows him to pursue his present course with apparent tranquillity. In the face of these warnings, and of his own acknowledgement that Morden's death would be an act for which repentance would be required, showing that he is aware of the sin that he is about to commit, it is difficult to conclude otherwise than that Lovelace faces damnation. However, because of the consistency of his conduct, the reader sees the approach of his death and probable eventual destination take on the character of tragic inevitability.

His assertion that he cannot avoid the duel is open to question. He does not need to fight Morden, unless he subscribes to the view that the rakes' code of honour alone has any validity as a standard of conduct, and he knows that this is not the case. He also knows that there is a higher law to which he stands accountable, and that by the terms of that law, the rakes' code is sinful in itself. Elsewhere, Richardson points out that duelling is opposed to Christianity, and in his novel he has drawn Lovelace as aware of Christianity's tenets.(31) So far from being unable to avoid the duel, he actively seeks to bring it about; he has himself initiated the exchange of letters which leads to the duel. Belford has told him:

> If you seek not Colonel Morden, it is my opinion that he will not seek you: for he is a man of principle. But if you seek him, I believe he will not shun you.
>
> Let me re-urge (it is the effect of my love for you!) that you know your own guilt in this affair, and should not be again an aggressor. It would be a pity that so brave a man as the Colonel should drop, were you and he to meet: and on the other hand, it would be dreadful, that you should be sent to your account unprepared for it; and pursuing a fresh violence.(p.1478)

Belford urges Lovelace to take the deaths of Mrs. Sinclair and 'Tomlinson' as warnings. It must be regarded as if Heaven spoke through Belford, but it seems that

Lovelace, no less than Clarissa, can act with both conscious and unconscious motives. On the surface, it is his pride and his adherence to the rakes' code of honour which urge him to this undertaking. However, his last letters, under their forced gaiety of tone, again and again strike a note of weariness and a barely suppressed grief and remorse. This is not a man who takes any pleasure in life, or who finds anything to make it worth the living. It is at least possible to contend that such a man might seek his own death as much as that of Morden.

Certainly when the choice of life is offered, when he is wounded, but not seriously, and Morden declares, 'Sir, I believe you have enough',[p.1486] Lovelace, weakened though he is, insists on resuming the duel. It is impossible to say definitively whether his motive is the pride that will not allow him to acknowledge defeat or a despair that seeks his own death. Social commentators of Richardson's own day remarked on the increasing incidence of suicide, and a lively debate on the topic was current. Modern commentators have analyzed such tendencies in terms of considering the factors which might have brought such an increase about; it is generally agreed that one factor predisposing to suicide is isolation. Such a factor has been recognized as a possible – probable – contribution to Clarissa's death, but Lovelace, too, has been seen as isolated from his familiar companions, eternally separated from Clarissa, and accompanied only by the newly hired valet who will report his death.[32] In such circumstances, a choice of death, whether consciously or unconsciously elected, would not be unlikely. Likewise, for such a man as Richardson presents, death in a duel would represent at once the most likely conclusion to such a life as he has lived, and would be seen to re-affirm his established persona as a man of honour. The manner of death Richardson gives to Lovelace also makes a far more telling comment on the evils of duelling, likewise a

subject of current debate,[33] than all the reasoned homilies on the subject with which Sir Charles Grandison will favour his would-be opponents.

'Had you a good conscience', writes Thomas à Kempis, 'Death would hold no terrors for you'.[34] Lovelace cannot have a good conscience, but he dies without apparent fear. It may be that like Bunyan's Mr. Badman, he cannot repent because he has no sense of sin. As Mr. Wiseman points out, a mere confession of sin is not enough; repentance would require the sinner to turn to God by means of Jesus Christ as well as by sorrow for sins committed.[35] Lovelace is not unaware of his sins, but the name of Christ is conspicuously absent from his dying utterances, and the relative quietness of his death, combined with serious sin, is a dangerous combination to the soul, as Bunyan points out. Just how much so, may only be apparent when God's judgement is pronounced.[36]

Richardson's treatment of Lovelace's death is strangely muted in contrast to the vivid descriptions of the deathbeds of his other sinners. In the Postscript to the third edition, Richardson remarks that he has 'thought fit to paint the death of the wicked as terrible as he could paint it'.[iv, p.554] This is clear in the conventional sense of the words in the deaths of Belton and Sinclair. However, in describing their deaths, he has already intimated the horrors of anticipating judgement and hell. Lovelace's death is a more complex and troubling event, and the simplicity of the account given by a narrator, a man far less sophisticated a writer than Belford, who describes the three other death-beds in the novel, leaves the reader to draw inferences and to make conjectures which are not required by the descriptions of those other deaths. The death of Lovelace is reported from the outside by a man who knows nothing of Lovelace's history and of the state of his soul. The reader sees and hears only what De la Tour sees and hears, and is aware that De la Tour's account must be

supplemented by his own knowledge of the dying man's history, drawn from being privy to Lovelace's character and letters, to conjecture what might be his frame of mind. However, in the absence of Lovelace's own accustomed self-analyses, those conjectures can be nothing more, and must lead to a further reflection that Lovelace's protean nature has always, anyway, made it difficult to establish at any given moment the truth of his motives and intentions. Clarissa herself, in the third edition, remarks upon the perplexity such changeability creates in her. It is no less perplexing to the reader.(ii, p.82)

Lovelace's dying words, that he has provoked his destiny,(p.1487) may be seen as the conventional gesture of 'a man of honour' in exonerating his opponent. Yet his words could also mean that he has brought his fate upon himself by his treatment of Clarissa, by his mode of life, or by seeking the duel. His remark defies exact interpretation. All that is clear is that he does not act upon Morden's repeated recommendations that he should seek Divine mercy in the 'few fleeting moments' that the Colonel believes are left to him.(p.1487) Those few moments extend to nearly twenty-four hours, but De la Tour records no words which might be interpreted as expressing repentance. Richardson does not control so closely, as he does with those earlier deaths, the reader's interpretation, and it is as easy to conclude that Lovelace's despair precludes his making any gesture of repentance as that, even at this point, imminent judgement remains only a theoretical proposition.

De la Tour's comforting assumption that Lovelace addresses Heaven as he dies is undercut by an irony of which the loyal valet is unaware, although the reader is not. It seems that in his last hours, Lovelace lives the dream he once had of Clarissa's apotheosis and his own damnation, and which he cannot now interpret with specious ingenuity. He may call upon Clarissa, and she is indeed a saint, but only

God can give pardon, and he does not, apparently, address himself to God. Since Richardson himself in his letter to Edward Moore[37] had remarked upon this omission, his very creator seems to doubt Lovelace's salvation without categorically condemning him to Hell.

The reader cannot reflect, any more than Belford can, on Lovelace's probable eternal destination with any satisfaction. Rather he must feel a sense of pity at so profound a loss. Richardson's use of De la Tour's simple narrative, expressive of the valet's sympathy and grief, must evoke similar emotions in the reader, but the reader's awareness of circumstances, denied to the servant, must also complicate his response to the event. Richardson has a point to make, which he regards as vitally important to the proper conduct of life, about sin and judgement. His presentation of Lovelace's character, the lengthy unfolding of the man's history and the thorough analysis of his inner life which the form of the epistolary novel has presented as no other medium could, have all given the reader a kind of negative spiritual biography, a record of graces offered and rejected, and of opportunities of repentance held out until the very last hours of life, and, apparently, rejected. Lovelace has lived and appears to die in a state of sin. The reader is reminded that the wages of sin is indeed death. The reader is warned.

Lovelace's conduct, with his frequent expressions of remorse which are never sustained, might seem to be an example of reprobation. However, in this novel, repentance is held out as a possibility to the dying and urged on them, until the last hours of life, if the sinner will only acknowledge his sin and seek pardon. Belford and Morden, who urge repentance on Mrs. Sinclair, Belton and Lovelace, may not be more theologically sophisticated than the average man, but Clarissa, too, urges Lovelace to repentance. It appears that Richardson demonstrates both a less rigorous

attitude to the availability of salvation than Calvinism allows, and a faith in the strong possibility of the Divine mercy on the condition of even late repentance.

If the reader must believe Lovelace is damned, and that Richardson intends both damnation and conviction of damnation, such a fate can only be, in the final analysis, the result of Lovelace's inability to abandon the false self he has created. In effect, if he is damned, his pride damns him. The reader who follows Lovelace's progress with close attention to the very point of death must be struck by the consistency of his conduct in being inconsistent. Only his egocentricity remains constant, and he maintains the self-deception which it engenders to his death. 'Self', as Richardson says elsewhere, 'is a grand misleader.'(38)

Lovelace's last clearly articulated words LET THIS EXPIATE!(p.1488) are enigmatic, but if he may be taken to mean that his death expiates his sins, it does nothing of the sort and the theatrical gesture is futile. His death cannot now affect Clarissa's situation for better or worse, since she is beyond any such considerations; nor does it atone for his sins, since atonement must rest on admission of guilt and repentance. Unless the reader takes these words in themselves as an oblique admission of guilt and an implied repentance, he may conclude that as Lovelace has done so often in life, in death he is making a gesture conceived in pride and in the desire to present himself as a hero, to sustain his chosen image, as Mark Kinkead-Weekes has asserted.(39) However, he is not now presenting the hero of some comedy of manners, but the hero of a tragedy. The irony is that this tragedy is no dramatic representation, but represents the reality of the probable loss of a soul. Lovelace only deceives himself if he believes that his gesture has any worth or validity.

The reader, however, needs to bear in mind that Lovelace's tragedy, like Clarissa's triumph, is a representation by an author who shapes the fates of both, and that Richardson had intended to direct his response. His letter to Edward Moore on the subject of Lovelace's death at once signals how he had intended his readers should respond, and yet at the same time suggests a certain ambivalence in his *own* response to the death of Lovelace, as if the creator who had, perhaps, intended an inevitable damnation for his creature found himself maintaining against all the evidence he had presented at least a remote possibility of the Creator's mercy. His remarks may suggest a half-recognized belief that if the fictional creature's fate may yet be not entirely fixed, the Divine mercy may operate in unsearchable ways. At the very least, Richardson himself appears to feel a compassion for Lovelace similar to that experienced by the reader, although both creator and reader have been fully privy to the man' sins.

> And at last with his wonted haughtiness of spirit – LET THIS EXPIATE all his apparent Invocation and address given to the SUPREME. Have I not given rather a dreadful than a hopeful Exit, with respect to Futurity, to the unhappy Lovelace! – I protest I have been unable to reperuse the acct: of his Death *with this great circumstance* in my Head, and to think of the triumphant one of my divine Clarissa, without pity – and I did hope that the contrast if attentively considered would be very striking.(40)

Richardson himself remarks here on Lovelace's consistency in maintaining his pride, but he also refers to Lovelace's apparent failure to invoke God, and claims that he has given 'rather a dreadful than a hopeful exit' to Lovelace, whom he characterizes as 'unhappy' rather than wicked. It is as if Lovelace, who so frequently eludes the reader's grasp, and often does not seem ever to be able to maintain a fixed identity, in his death has momentarily eluded even his creator's control. Or it may be that Richardson, admittedly enamoured of his 'divine Clarissa' is no less enthralled by his villain, only less likely to recognize or to admit the fact. If this is the case,

there is a parallel of which Richardson himself may have been aware. 'The Lord', says the Psalmist, is 'full of compassion', and 'his tender mercies are over all his works'. (Psalm 145). It seems that Richardson too, despite himself, has compassion for *his* creation, and cannot quite bring himself to deny Lovelace all mercy, whatever dreadful exit Lovelace's sins may deserve, and his author's intentions demand.

10

The Four Last Things – The Saint

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His Saints[1]

So the psalmist celebrates the servants of God who crown a life of virtue with a triumphant death. There is no doubt that Richardson intended his readers to perceive Clarissa as a saint, and her death as the apotheosis of Christian virtue. To those who objected that her excellence was improbable, he replied, in the Postscript to the third edition, that her education had encouraged virtue, and that many women, given occasion, have exerted like virtues and reached her perfection.[iv. p.565] Moreover, schematically, he appears to have intended her, in this respect, to stand opposed to Lovelace. In a letter to Lady Bradshaigh, he writes:

> But have I really made Clarissa what the Woman of Virtue, of Christian Virtue, cannot be? – Surely, I have not. Have you not seen from Infancy in her, by the help of her worthy Norton, and the good Dr. Lewen (as in Lovelace the early Libertine) in her the early Saint? The one in a manner calling out for Punishment – The other for a heavenly Crown?[2]

It is by overcoming the failings of a fallen humanity that Clarissa is to become a saint, since in another letter, to Aaron Hill, Richardson writes that, 'I would that she should have some little things to be blamed for, tho' nothing in her will'.[3] His assertion to Lady Bradshaigh that it is possible for Christians to achieve Clarissa's virtue is not made, therefore, without a recognition that his heroine shares those human failings. Carol Flynn's illuminating remark that Clarissa's sanctity reflects her ambivalence as well as her integrity[4] may therefore be regarded as a starting point to any discussion of that sanctity. However, it is a remark that requires

qualification. Such ambivalence, in Christian terms, is characteristic of sinners, as well as of saints, since it must take its origin in the primal impairment of human nature. The sinner, as Richardson indicates when he refers to Lovelace as 'wicked upon principle'(5) elects to follow the faulty impulses of fallen nature which are opposed to the will of God. The saint seeks to overcome them. Sanctity is not, and is not to be presented as being, the result of effortless virtue, but of subduing the impulses of that impaired nature in a constant and conscious struggle to bring the will into accordance with the will of God. Clarissa's triumphant death, in the expectation of that heavenly crown, is achieved at the expense of such a struggle with nature, and not because she is exempt from its penalties.

However, if the reader responds to the death of Clarissa as her creator appears to have intended, and as he represents those who surround her deathbed as responding, with awe, that reader must also feel a sense of disquiet. The reason for this is because in creating his saint, Richardson has also created a complex figure whose motives, although pure in intention, are often emotionally ambiguous. How, if he is to create a credible human being, placed in an extreme situation, could they be otherwise? The reader is moved and troubled precisely because in Clarissa's faulty humanity he must recognize his own.

Moreover, Richardson's saint, like all the saints – with their ability to remind us what human nature may achieve by a positive response to grace – is disturbing to the Christian. By considering the saints, the Christian is expected to measure the distance between their achievement and his own state. Richardson's remarks to Lady Bradshaigh above suggest that he shares this expectation on behalf of his readers. In Clarissa herself, he offers them an example to emulate in the same way that the writers of the religious conduct books urged on their readers a manner of living and

dying that would be in accordance with both reason and conscience, in short, with their perception of the demands of the Divine will. In Clarissa's death, he describes the death that the Christian should strive to achieve.

The letter to Lady Bradshaigh reminds us of the Christian conviction, so often expressed in popular religious works, that such a death is not to be achieved without due preparation, and that it is too late to begin such a preparation on the deathbed itself, since the very condition of sickness disables the sufferer from making any such attempt truly effective.(6) In terms of such a preparation, Clarissa's living and dying are both exemplary,(7) if preparing for death may be seen as a life-long vocation, and in a sense the purpose of Christian life itself, since it is only through death that the goal of human existence, the enjoyment of God, may be achieved. Calvin makes this very point:

> We ought to hold that we are baptised for the mortification of our flesh, which is begun in baptism, is prosecuted every day, and will be finished when we depart this life to go to the Lord.(8)

Richardson clearly intended his heroine, unlike his sinners, to exemplify such Christian preparedness for death. From the opening of the novel, she is shown to live her life in accordance with the virtues of faith, charity and a prudence beyond her years. Moreover, she interrogates her heart rigorously for faults, so that she may repent of them and eradicate them. As the novel progresses, she is shown to come, by means of the trials laid upon her, to a recognition of, and repentance for, the sins which she perceives to stand between herself and Heaven, so that the preparation for death which she undertakes in her last illness is but an extension of the preparation that has been her life. Whether Richardson intended that the meticulous preparation that he gives to Clarissa at this point should be understood to atone for what she has not consciously recognized in herself is open to question. However, Clarissa's own

remarks upon the subject are in accordance with orthodox Christian thought on such matters, and since Richardson means her to be an example, the reader may infer that they express his own views:

> For believe me, sir, that now in this last stage very few things will bear the test, or be passed as laudable, if *pardonable*, at our own bar, much less at a more tremendous one, in all we have done or delighted in, even in a life not very offensive neither, as *we* may think! Ought we not then to study in our *full day*, before the dark hours approach, so to live as may afford reflections that will soften the agony of the last moments when they come, and let in upon the departing soul a ray of Divine Mercy to illuminate its passage into an awful eternity?(p.1337)

To a modern reader, the notion of life-long awareness of death verges on the morbid, but the religious literature popular in Richardson's own age does not regard such sentiments in the same light. So important does it hold the goal of eternal life, so vital the necessity to be aware of the spiritual dangers consequent on sin in compromising the hope of attaining that goal, that living life in the expectation of death appears the only sane way to live at all. William Law advises his readers to pray that death may be ever in their thoughts, and to remember it as the last thought of every day:

> Represent to your imagination that your bed is your grave, that all things are ready for your interment, that you are to have no more to do with this world and that it will be owing to God's great mercy if you ever see the light of the sun again or have another day to add to your works of piety.(9)

The reader of Richardson's novel is driven to reflect that Clarissa comes to follow this advice almost literally; if she does not actually consider her bed as her grave, she makes her coffin the most significant item of furniture in her room and dwells – with great satisfaction, even with eagerness – on how soon she will occupy it. The purchase of that coffin shocks the reader as much as it does Belford, but Clarissa can point out, very reasonably, that she has no-one to undertake such duties

on her behalf. Richardson appears to present his heroine as admirably detached from the fear and rejection of death which disfigure the dying moments of his sinners; she behaves, in fact, rationally. However, it is easy to suspect in her rationality at this point the rationalization of an unrecognized impulse towards death.

As the conduct books recommend, Clarissa has avoided the danger of relying upon a deathbed repentance to secure her salvation. Richardson's treatment of his sinners emphasizes the results of neglecting what should be a life-long habit of penitence(10); his treatment of Clarissa's life and death is designed to show the positive results of embracing that same penitence as part of the Christian vocation. Some Christian theologians popular in Richardson's time, doubting the efficacy of deathbed repentance, presumably on the grounds that *metanoia*, usually translated as *repentance*, means a change of heart or direction, urge that repentance, like virtue, should be a life-long condition, practised with the long-term view in mind of preparing for death.(11)

Richardson seems prepared to allow his sinners the opportunity, if they will only seize it, to repent on their deathbeds, but renders their struggles to arrive at a penitent state so painful that the reader is encouraged thereby to see how far more effective for the comfort of the dying must be the consistent practice of penitence as of virtue. It is clear that his saint repents her errors as soon as they present themselves to her mind as such. Clarissa repents her departure with Lovelace from the moment that she can think clearly about the matter, and the pride that led her to correspond with him when her anguished self-examination after the rape makes it apparent to her.

If she is not *shown* to go as far as William Law recommends, in setting aside each evening time in which to review the day past and repent of its sins, she *is* shown

to be in agreement with the reason for which he makes this recommendation, the absolute necessity of repentance, and the need to seek God's assisting grace to avoid further sin. 'Nor can you repent', says Law, 'But so far as you know what it is you are repenting of', adding that true repentance should touch the heart and leave 'a horror and detestation of sin upon the mind'.(12) The reader may suspect that while Clarissa feels all the detestation of her sins that any theologian could desire, she is consciously unaware of at least some things of which she repents, but repent she does, and imposes a terrible penance. If, as Jeremy Taylor asserts, we can prevent God's anger on the Day of Judgement by being angry at ourselves,(13) it is arguable that Clarissa exercises on herself such preventative anger.

To those who surround her deathbed, Clarissa seems well-prepared for death, assured that her repentance has been accepted, and impressing the beholders with 'such a sweetness of temper, so much patience and resignation, as she seems to be mistress of'.(p.1178) She herself remarks on the gradual detachment from the satisfactions of this life in the death with which God blesses her. Such sentiments belong to a well-established tradition of Christian thought. St. Augustine sees death as the gateway to life, and expresses this paradox in terms with which Clarissa would concur:

> God has granted to faith so great a gift of grace that death, which all agree to be the contrary of life, has become the means by which men pass into life.(14)

Why is it then, that the death of Clarissa, moving and even awe-inspiring as it is, convincing the reader as much as Belford and the other onlookers that this is indeed the passing of a saint, so disturbing? And why, in retrospect does it make her life also disturbing?

The whole presentation of her death, so closely reminiscent of exemplary Christian deathbeds described by Law and Taylor, corresponding in every several detail to such portrayals of the attitudes of patience, charity and resignation appropriate to the passing of a Christian soul, is undercut by ambiguities, and it is impossible to ascertain whether Richardson intended that his readers' response should recognize these, or whether he himself recognized them. Richardson's desire to control his readers' response is well known, but this may well be an instance in which not only the reader escapes that control, but also the character. The psychological verisimilitude of his presentation has its own demands, the fulfilment of which makes Clarissa the living figure that she is for the reader, and which distinguishes her from the exemplary figures of the conduct books, figures which are never intended to be other than one-dimensional.

The death of Clarissa is both complicated and enriched by such complexities, because the life of Clarissa, as Richardson presents it to us, also leaves so many questions impossible to answer definitively. Richardson's avowed intention was to offer an example of Christian living and dying, but the character he creates would be far less effective did his presentation not trouble the reader. Clarissa's progress towards Heaven is not shown to be merely the linear journey of a young girl of conventional piety towards a deeper relationship with God, but the struggle of a soul to transcend her nature in the face of that nature's inherited damage, and so liable to the very end to misinterpretations and failings. This is, after all, the Christian conception of what it is to be human, and of what the Christian vocation in this world is, to struggle towards God in despite of a nature flawed by sin and weakness. No less an authority than St. Paul finds himself bewildered by the complexities of his

own nature, and attributes his difficulties to the presence of the damage attendant on the fall:

> For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.
>
> For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. (Romans 7.14-15)

His words suggest a tension between the conscious will, assisted by grace towards what is good, and the impulses, not always recognized as such, of a fallen nature, which drive the individual towards what reason may tell him is opposed to the law of God. They also suggest that both conscious and unconscious motives may co-exist, to perplex and trouble the soul.

If Richardson's heroine is to provide the example he wishes to offer, she cannot be exempt from such complexities. The question remains as to how far he himself intended that she should reflect them. From the beginning of the novel, it is made clear that Clarissa's formidable will, in every act and intention, is exercised to shape her life and conduct according to the prescriptions of Christianity. Seeking grace, she appears to the reader to have had it bestowed upon her to assist her disposition to virtue. However, Samuel Johnson's comment upon Clarissa that 'there is always something she prefers to truth',[(15)] must be admitted to have some justice. The reader may or may not agree that Clarissa *always* expresses preferences other than those of truth, but from an early stage in the novel, it is apparent that she certainly does so in some important respects. It is as clear to the reader, as it is to Anna, for example, that Clarissa is attracted to Lovelace, and either remains unaware of it, or is unable to admit it to herself.

The reader is left to wonder in what other respects Clarissa may fail to know her own heart, and in her failure to do so, may precipitate what is in human terms her

tragedy, if in Divine terms her triumph. The theologian might say that her flawed nature makes her liable to such failures of reason or to self-deception, but that by the grace of God, her sanctification is brought out of this evil. A secular reader of the novel might see Clarissa's belief that Providence has brought about her salvation through suffering, as further evidence of self-deception. Whichever view is embraced, no reader, of whatever persuasion, can deny that Clarissa's progress towards Heaven, or simply towards death, remains problematic.

Long before Clarissa reaches the point when she is about to enjoy the fullness of Truth in the Christian sense, the reader becomes aware that 'truth' in the sense of which Johnson appears to be speaking , is not always to be clearly defined. Dying, Clarissa remarks that eighteen of her nineteen years have been happy, and expresses her gratitude for this blessing. At first sight this remark may appear to reflect a truth. Clarissa claims to have enjoyed the indulgence of her parents and the affection of all who have surrounded her. Yet it is clear to the reader that the Harlowe family, with its ambitious and soulless materialism, can hardly have been a happy household. The autocracy of Mr. Harlowe, the uneasy passivity of his wife, the sharp envy of her siblings have surrounded Clarissa, not love. Moreover, one remark to Anna, early in the novel, not only comes strangely from a young, healthy woman, but also suggests a sense that her apparently favoured position in this household, full of tensions, may be conditional: love may be withdrawn. Commenting on the family upset after the duel which opens the novel, Clarissa writes, 'I have sometimes wished that it had pleased God to have taken me in my last fever, when I had everybody's love and good opinion'.(p.41)

To wish for death as a response to family disturbance may seem a little extreme, and must argue for a heightened tension in the writer. It is not the response

of a young woman who enjoys a happy life and faces the future with the optimism of youth. Clarissa's thoughts turn much upon death, even before she faces the prospect of dying young. Some time later, still in her father's house, and increasingly perplexed by Lovelace's machinations, she expresses her fears that he might come to Harlowe Place in the following terms:

> If he come hither (and very desirous he is of my leave to come), I am afraid there will be murder. To avoid that, if there were no other way, I would most willingly be buried alive.(p.142)

Such a hypothetical condition as being buried alive is a very curious conclusion to an expression of fear about a possible meeting between James and Lovelace, although Clarissa no doubt consciously uses the phrase in a conventional way to suggest the strength of her apprehensions. Her fear of the possible dangers of such a meeting is reasonable enough, but the reader may recall this remark later when Clarissa describes a dream in which Lovelace does indeed bury her, after stabbing her. The sexual overtones of the dream are frequently noted, but Clarissa's words here, with their apparent dislocation of meaning between a possible danger to James of being pierced by Lovelace's sword, and an alternative of herself being buried alive, suggest a confused connection in her mind between Lovelace's skill as a swordsman (perhaps lover), herself, and death. If Clarissa permits Lovelace's presence, she, as well as James, may be in danger, but of yielding to his attractions. Clarissa fears spiritual death perhaps, as a result of such an encounter, and would prefer her own physical death to the loss of her soul.

A number of commentators have already pointed out that for Clarissa, death presents itself as an alternative to the distresses of life.(16) If she were presented with a secret desire of the heart which conflicted with conscious principle, the only resolution to such a conflict which did not embrace dishonour, disgrace or sin, might

well be death. It certainly seems desirable as an alternative to marriage with Solmes, and to conflict with her family. Finding that familial love is indeed conditional, she adds:

> I don't know what to do, not I! – God forgive me, but I am very impatient! – I wish – But I don't know what to wish, without a sin! – Yet I wish it would please God to take me to his mercy! – I can meet with none here! – What a world is this! What is there in it desirable? The good we hope for, so strangely mixed, that one knows not what to wish for: and one half of mankind tormenting the other, and being tormented themselves in tormenting![p.224]

In all this confusion, Clarissa clings to one value: her fixed point is that she must not sin, yet to avoid sin seems impossible. God could resolve her pain if He would only take her, but God declines to do so. Clarissa's reflections are not unlikely in the circumstances, but the frequency with which her thoughts turn to death as an alternative to the pains of life, prepares the reader for what may in retrospect, appear an inevitable conclusion to that life.

By the time that Clarissa's physical decline begins, her relationship with Lovelace, culminating in the rape, has led her to abandon all hope of happiness on earth. It is one thing to long for union with God, but it is quite another to seek to be divested of a body which its possessor characterizes as 'viler earth' than that which is thrown on the dead. The reader cannot be sure that the remarks which Clarissa addresses to Anna on the joys of Heaven reflect the Christian desire for union with God rather than a disgust of her own violated flesh:

> But we shall one day, I hope (and that must comfort us both), meet, never to part again! Then, divested of the shades of body, shall we be all light and all mind – Then how unalloyed, how perfect, will be our friendship! Our love then will have one and the same adorable object, and we shall enjoy it and each other to all eternity![p.1348]

Clarissa's anticipation of the enjoyment of the Beatific Vision in perfect charity with a beloved friend is impeccably orthodox in sentiment, but Christian

theology has always recognized that man, unlike the angels, is a composite being, so much so that body and soul are inextricably linked. The Christian faith rests, as St. Paul tells us, on the Resurrection of Christ, and Christians must therefore look to the resurrection of the body.(17) Clarissa apparently does not. Her vision of Heaven is of a state in which the body is forever absent. St. Augustine has some remarks on the relationship between body and soul which have an application to the state of mind indicated by Clarissa's remarks above:

> Some say that they would prefer not to have a body at all, but they are mistaken. For what they hate is not their body, but its imperfections, its dead weight. What they want is not to have no body at all, but to have one free from corruption and totally responsive.(18)

Clarissa does not want a body which has been subjected to another's corruption, nor one which may respond to another's attractions. Certainly, in complaining that her body 'encumbers', she hates the weight that Lovelace's imperfections, and – possibly – her own, have imposed on it. St. Augustine continues that men must be told how to love their bodies so as to care for them sensibly, and adds, 'For it is equally obvious that one loves one's own body and wants it to be healthy and sound'.(19) However, this is not at all obvious in Clarissa's case. She finds existence in the body virtually unendurable, records its decline with a degree of detachment which amounts to satisfaction,(20) and eagerly awaits its dissolution.(pp.1336-1337) Such satisfaction suggests less a Christian readiness to accept the will of God, than the hidden fulfilment of a will of her own. Heaven is only open to those, in her view, who are 'all light and all mind'.

The body, claims Aquinas, is not intrinsically evil, and is to be loved as a Divine creation, but not the sins which we may commit through it:

> Our bodies were created by God, not as the Manicheans pretend by some evil principle. So we can serve God with our bodies, and should love them with the charity with which we love God. What

> we should not love is the taint of sin and the damage that its punishment has wreaked in our bodies.(21)

Clarissa, it seems, has confused the sin committed *on* her body for sin committed *by* her body, and makes the error of hating that body itself. As for her conception of eternity as a state in which she will be forever disembodied spirit, and happy because of that very disembodiment, both Aquinas and St. Augustine appear to be agreed upon the matter, since the former's discussion of the question uses the latter as an authority. Man as a composite being cannot fully enjoy God as a disembodied spirit, but is distracted by a natural yearning for his lost body, into which his spiritual joy will overflow.(22) Aquinas disputes with those who claim that 'the soul needs to be entirely separated from its body', and asserts that since it is natural for body and soul to be united, the fulfilment of the soul cannot exclude this natural fulfilment, and that for human happiness to be complete in every way, 'it presupposes and results in complete well-being of our bodies'.(23)

Clarissa's experiences have deprived her of the joyful anticipation of this complete human fulfilment in Heaven, as they have deprived her of the hope of any fulfilment, if she desired it, through the body on earth. What then, if Clarissa rejects her life along with her body, would she make of St. Augustine's triumphant declaration?

> At the resurrection the saints will inhabit the actual bodies in which they suffered the hardships of this life on earth; yet these bodies will be such that no trace of corruption or frustration will affect their flesh, nor will any sorrow or mischance interfere with their felicity.(24)

Clarissa's response to the hardships that she has experienced in this life is to reject the body which has suffered them. Such a conclusion can only be the result of the imperfections of a fallen nature, which does not see that the renewal of shattered completeness is not only possible in the next life, but is to be expected. However,

Clarissa's conduct, in literary terms, may also be seen to reflect the temper of her times. As Jean Hagstrum points out:

> The notion of woman as too fragile for masculine handling was never totally absent from eighteenth-century sensibility. This tendency to make the angel in woman not only transcend but sometimes even deny her body was, as often in Western culture, associated with religious feeling and the hesitations in love induced by Christian asceticism.(25)

Clarissa has denied her body's response to Lovelace. She now carries her reservations a step further and attempts to deny that body's worth and the prospect that it will share the glory of resurrection. In this respect, the theologian might regard Richardson's heroine as a heretic. When St. Augustine describes the beatified state, he clearly means that man will enter into it in the fullness of his composite nature.

> My God, my mercy, I shall not turn aside until you gather all that I am into that holy place of peace, rescuing me from this world where I am dismembered and deformed, and giving me new form and new strength for eternity.(26)

Clarissa may be mistaken about the state in which she will pass eternity, but not about that union with God which, according to Christian theology, follows death. It is a union which Clarissa expresses in terms of a mystic marriage. She is not alone in using the imagery of courtship, marriage and consummation to express such a union, since these images are consistently employed by mystics. Moreover the Church itself has always used the Song of Solomon as an image which celebrates its mystical union with Christ. However, in Clarissa's case, the use of such language must be considered in relation to the blasting of her earthly hopes of fulfilment, and her use of such imagery in relation to the Divine bridegroom is counterpointed by reference to those occasions when she is being prepared, unwillingly, to be the bride of Solmes, and when, perhaps less unwillingly, but with

fearful modesty, the bride of Lovelace. One commentator has remarked that Clarissa's two earthly courtships lead to a third marriage with death,[27] but this comment does not quite convey the ambivalence of Clarissa's final choice of bridegroom. In effect, Christ and death are equally desirable, but only one is consciously elected.

For Clarissa death and wedding clothes appear to be associated, but she comes to transform an association of such garments with distress into an association with blessedness. Before setting out for London with Lovelace, she expresses a premonition of approaching disaster in the following terms:

> If I could flatter myself that my indifference to all the joys of this life proceeded from *proper* motives, and not rather from the disappointments and mortifications my pride has met with, how much rather, I think, should I choose to be wedded to my shroud than to any man on earth![pp.513-514]

The question must remain, whether Clarissa's unconscious motives, after the rape, do persuade her that her choice of a shroud as a wedding garment may be the object of legitimate desire. After her second escape from Lovelace, Clarissa wears only the shining white that both asserts and symbolizes purity, but shrouds too, are white, and one of her papers, written in the aftermath of the rape, suggests that a moment of determination has taken place in her in favour of the shroud as a wedding garment. Lovelace has indeed been the 'fretting moth that corrupteth the fairest garment':

> Who now shall assist in the solemn preparations? Who now shall provide the nuptial ornaments, which soften and divert the apprehensions of the fearful virgin?[p.892]

Despite the conviction of her rational self, when that is restored, that she is essentially unchanged and that her will has not been corrupted, Clarissa seems to have another self which may hold its own conviction of a virgin state lost, and of a

purity which will not be applauded in this world. That self will provide the nuptial ornaments, the coffin and the shroud. Christ is a bridegroom of whom she may have no apprehensions.

Having been threatened with Solmes as a bridegroom, and betrayed by Lovelace, whom her natural, if unacknowledged, response might have led her to accept, Clarissa's choice of a heavenly spouse is not an unlikely one, given the piety which has always characterized her, and which, deepening under the pressure of adversity, offers an alternative fulfilment to the earthly. 'I am upon a better preparation than for an earthly husband', she tells Mrs. Norton,(p.1121) but it is difficult for the reader to ascertain, initially, whether Clarissa is in reality more prepared to embrace death than the Divine spouse. Her mind dwells much upon this mystical marriage. It is the reader who may have doubts as to the identity of the bridegroom; Clarissa appears to have none:

> As for me, never bride was so ready as I am. My wedding garments are bought – and though not fine or gaudy to the sight ... (for I have no beholders' eyes to wish to glitter in), yet will they be the easiest, the *happiest* suit, that ever bridal maiden wore – for they are such as carry with them a security against all those anxieties, pains, and perturbations, which sometimes succeed to the most promising outsettings.
>
> And now, my dear Mrs. Norton, do I wish for no other. Oh hasten, good God, if it be thy blessed will, the happy moment that I am to be decked out in this all-quieting garb!(p.1331)

Saints have used such imagery to convey their moments of union with God. It is not, therefore, surprising that Clarissa, who claims that her frame of mind might have had its origin in disappointment, but has now developed into a desire for union with the Absolute,(p.1121) should employ it to convey her desire for that union.(28) However, her remarks, for all their context of mysticism, are still disturbing. As Evelyn Underhill points out, the mystics have used the imagery of the wedding as

exactly that, an *image* to express the notion of the desired union with God, and the mention of bridal clothes for them is the means to convey their spiritual preparedness for such a union.[29] In Clarissa's case, here, the term 'wedding garments' refers to an actual, concrete reality, to physical objects, her shroud and her coffin, and these garments she declares will be 'the easiest, the happiest suit that ever bridal maiden wore'.

It seems that it is less the mystical union which Clarissa seeks than the relief of pain and distress which will come with the assumption of those wedding garments. Perhaps the most disturbing word of all is 'maiden'. As in her papers after the rape, Clarissa remarks on the virginity of the bride, a virginity which, technically, has been wrested from her. She writes as if maidenhood may be restored by the assumption of these garments. Her mind seems to turn, unconsciously but not unnaturally, upon the violation of her person, as it will again in the symbolism of the emblems she chooses for her coffin[pp.1305-1306] and on the need, although she is innocent, for atonement. What she casts off in order to assume her wedding garments are 'these rags of mortality',[p.1341] a term that can only refer to her body, and which conveys a revulsion disquieting to the reader.

It must appear that despite Clarissa's rational and correct conviction of innocence of any complicity in the rape, her underlying response to violation has left her with a sense of defilement, even of guilt, which determines a choice of death. The self-examination she undertook to ascertain her innocence was necessarily and properly the concern of the intellect, as conscience according to Christian belief is a function of reason, but her just conclusion has not, could not, take into account the emotional response to so traumatic an event. The reader will have noticed in Clarissa before a divergence between intellect and emotion; her intellect could lay down

conditions for a response to Lovelace, while her emotions responded in despite of reason, and without conditions. This effect has been attributed to her confusion between moral and emotional analysis, but in Christian terms, such a divergence reflects the disintegrated state of fallen nature, and therefore such confusion is a state to which *any* human being, not only Clarissa, may be liable.(30) Clarissa herself could not perceive this divergence, and she does not now, when she compares her approaching death to the nuptials of the virgin bride, recognize the expression of an unconscious conviction of a defilement which her reason knows is not her own, and a conviction that death may appear the only expiation. Such a conclusion may be the resolution to her sense of the vileness of her 'self'. The bridal garments she has purchased do indeed offer a security against all perturbation, but Clarissa's words read as if she is seeking a conclusion to an unbearable situation here on earth rather than positively anticipating the mystic union. The reader has no reason to doubt the sincerity of her contention that she wishes for no other garb, but must have some doubt as to why she so wishes.

As Lovelace asks with callous detachment, or perhaps with a guilt which cannot bear its own reflections, 'Is death the *natural* consequence of a rape?'.(p.1439) Shocking as the remark may be, Lovelace has touched upon a question which must trouble the reader who looks in vain for a description of any recognizable symptom of a disease which could bring, within a few months, a girl in blooming health to skeletal death. As Clarissa's decline begins, he must be uncomfortably aware of those earlier remarks of hers, while still enjoying that health, which indicated an underlying attraction to death, and her frequently expressed conviction, in the aftermath of the rape, that she will not live long.

Richardson's scheme demanded the death of his heroine; she could not otherwise enjoy the reward promised to the faithful soul who serves God through all vicissitudes, and who perceives in suffering the hand of Providence. 'I could not think of leaving my Heroine short of Heaven', he wrote to Lady Bradshaigh.(31) However, it is not only Richardson's formal scheme which requires such an outcome for his heroine, but the inexorable logic of the psychology of the character he has created. Clarissa's initial, disturbed response to rape is to think of death; her papers make that clear when she scribbles these lines:

> When honour's lost, 'tis a relief to die:
> Death's but a sure retreat from infamy.(p.893)

However, Clarissa is in her right mind when she tells Mrs. Norton that she may only receive a pardon from her parents when she is in extremis, as a viaticum, and adds that she does not expect to live long.(p.992) A little later she is writing to Anna:

> Let me slide quietly into my grave; and let it not be remembered, except by one friendly tear, and no more, dropped from your gentle eye ... on the happy day that shall shut up all my sorrows ...(p.1013)

These are clearly the words of a young woman who not only expects an early death, but who feels painfully wounded by betrayal and rejection: Clarissa's rationality has been restored by means of the ordeal of self-examination to which she subjected herself after the rape, but emotions are not amenable to reason in man's fallen state (at least, in the Christian view). Such remarks as Clarissa's reflect a disturbance which *would* be a natural consequence of what she has undergone. Richardson's presentation of her state is true to psychological probability. Death is not a natural consequence of rape, but disturbance *is*, and no matter how much rationality may strive to find the means of accommodation with such an experience,

itself compounding the earlier psychological pressures of conflict and rejection by the Harlowes, the emotional response to such traumas may well be to seek to withdraw from a life which has proved so painful, even if withdrawal is not consciously recognized as such.

Just as Clarissa's thoughts have turned upon death, even before leaving her father's house, so they have turned upon suicide. It appears to be a notion that both attracts and repels her as a solution to her difficulties. If it does not attract her, there is no reason why it should be in her thoughts at all. When Aunt Hervey desires Clarissa to assure her that she would offer no violence to herself, the latter replies with an impeccably Christian response:

> God, I said, had given me more grace I hoped than to be guilty of so horrid a rashness. I was His creature, and not *my own*.(p.341)

Yet even so, a little later Clarissa records for Anna her remark to Lovelace that if she could die when she wished, without unpardonable sin, she would prefer to do so rather than leave her father's house under his protection.(p.350) Having accepted that protection she twice threatens suicide, as a response to Lovelace's encroachments in the fire scene, and again in the pen-knife scene, a situation which recalls the response of Lucretia, that classical pattern of outraged chastity, which as Ian Donaldson's study The Rapes of Lucretia(32) has demonstrated, caught the imagination of succeeding ages, and underwent various transformations in doing so. Clarissa, however, is a Christian heroine, and is in no doubt of the sin of self-destruction:

> I dare die. It is in defence of my honour. God will be merciful to my poor soul! – I expect no mercy from thee! ... My heart from *principle* abhors the act which *thou* makest *necessary*!(pp.950-951)

However, Clarissa's remarks here suggest that she may not regard self-destruction as absolutely prohibited in extreme circumstances, even given that these

circumstances are sufficient to cause her to talk somewhat wildly. In this respect, her remarks may be seen to reflect to some degree the controversy concerning the culpability of suicide which characterized the latter part of the seventeenth century and the eighteenth century. Countless commentators contemporary with Richardson, or earlier, had expressed a variety of conclusions on the subject, ranging from those churchmen who expressed anew the traditional Christian view of suicide as a sin which involved an inevitable damnation, to Hume, whose advocacy of suicide he prudently declined to have published except posthumously.(33) Clarissa might have found some support for her assertion here that God would be merciful to a woman who dies in defence of her honour in John Donne's treatise Biathanatos, which declared that in certain circumstances, suicide may be lawful if the glory of God is thereby advanced and if the party is disinterested. He argues that Protestantism has no established human judge of sins, and that the individual may then choose to condemn himself if his conscience regards it as lawful to do so.(34)

No modern commentator appears to dispute the fact that the death of Clarissa is, in fact, if not in conscious intention, a case of suicide, the result of grief or guilt.(35) Clarissa herself asserts her abhorrence of the act upon principle, and Lovelace remarks of the possibility of self-destruction on her part that 'there is no fear of that from her *deliberate* mind'.(p.728) However, it is not Clarissa's deliberate mind that always determines her actions. Moreover, Richardson himself, elsewhere offers a comment which may reflect on Lovelace's remark. 'The mind has great power over the body', he writes, but he does not specify whether that mind is deliberate or not.(36) Belford expresses fears that Clarissa's resentment may cause her 'like another Lucretia' to kill herself, but adds that if her piety should preserve her

from violence 'wasting grief will soon put a period to her days'.(p.710) His words are prophetic, but more than grief may be involved in this outcome.

St. Augustine tells us that Lucretia committed an act of injustice on herself in killing an innocent woman. He argues that only she could know if she condemned herself because:

> She was so enticed by her own desire that she consented to the act and that when she came to punish herself she was so grieved that she thought death her only expiation.(37)

Even if Lucretia were guilty, he says, penance, not self-murder was required. He concludes that to Christian women, suicide is forbidden in all circumstances, even following an act of violation; they do not 'take vengeance on themselves for another's crime'.(38) He adds that nowhere in the Sacred Books can be found any injunction or permission to commit suicide, 'either to ensure immortality or to avoid or escape any evil'.(39) In the light of these pronouncements, it would appear that Clarissa's threat to commit suicide to defend her honour rests on very shaky theological ground.

Lovelace's remark that there is no fear of suicide arising from her 'deliberate mind' opens up the question of what unconscious motives may exist in that mind, whether Clarissa has either condemned herself to death in preference to the misery of a ruined life in this world, or is driven by an unjustified and unrecognized sense of guilt for her very attraction to Lovelace, presenting itself to her as complicity in an act of which her conscious mind exonerates her. If so, she may indeed be a suicide, but may not be guilty of choosing sin, since choice in this respect is usually represented by Christian orthodoxy as a function of reason. Clarissa has not willed complicity in the rape; she does not consciously will her death, but the hidden determinations of her heart may mistakenly assign guilt for the one, and express a

preference for the other. Certainly a number of modern commentators have pointed out that in her situation are many of the factors which would predispose an individual towards such a choice.(40)

Clarissa frequently expresses, during her long decline, a desire for death, but does not appear to exhibit any positive resolution to end her life by any act of omission or commission. She is scrupulous in obeying the instructions of her medical attendants, and in seeking their advice as to how she should preserve her life until it should please God to relieve her of it. She writes to Anna that she has rejected any notion of suicide and 'like a poor coward desert my post, when I *can* maintain it, and when it is my *duty* to maintain it'. She adds that she would think it sinful to neglect herself wilfully, and so purposely bring about her death.(p.1117)

The important word she uses is 'wilfully', since the reader is reminded that the will, too, is regarded as a function of reason. Unless the reader considers Clarissa a liar or a hypocrite, he must take what she says as sincere and as expressive of her conscious intentions, but Clarissa has demonstrated before that she sometimes cannot easily distinguish between the impulses of her emotions and the conclusions of her reason. Meanwhile, Clarissa's medical attendants are by no means convinced that she is not responsible for her decline, and believe she could still recover with adequate rest and nourishment.(p.1129) Moreover, Lovelace, an acute observer, expresses in his usual mocking and theatrical manner to Mr. Hickman, his own conviction that Clarissa has chosen a new suitor, 'His name, in short is DEATH! – DEATH, sir ...'.(p.1097)

It must be accepted that Clarissa chooses to die, not 'wilfully', but at a deeper level than her conscious reason may determine. Abstention from food as she abstains, is not without precedent in a religious context. Caroline Walker Bynum

points out that for religious women of the Middle Ages, fasting was a way of 'stripping the self of pleasure and support', and refers to St. Catherine of Siena, who was (like Clarissa) accused of committing a form of suicide by abstention from food. Like Clarissa, she responded by referring to herself as suffering from an infirmity.(41) Bynum also notes that for one strain of Mediaeval moral teaching, fasting was associated with the rejection of the body,(42) and that for some mystics, hungering for God was associated with rejection of earthly food.(43)

In all these respects, Clarissa might be seen to fit a pattern of female asceticism. However, there are other aspects to the rejection of food which are more disturbing and might equally apply in Clarissa's case: John Donne asserts that 'indiscreet fasting' is a means of 'deserting' ourselves, and quotes St. Jerome on the subject to support a view that such fasting is a covert form of suicide.(44) Clarissa's medical attendants certainly regard her fasting as 'indiscreet', but what may be open to question is whether Clarissa herself believes, at a deeper level than she is consciously aware of, that she undertakes a course of action which at once punishes and subdues the flesh. Fasting has always had a penitential aspect in Judaeo-Christian traditions, and yet, the interpreters of those traditions add a warning that fasting must be used in moderation:

> For right reason leads us to abstain only when and as we ought, with a cheerful heart, and for God's glory, not our own. Fasting as such is a sort of punishment, not something one would choose to do unless it had a useful purpose.(45)

The question in Clarissa's case turns on the purpose of the fast which she claims, and believes, to be the result of physical infirmity. Calvin offers a number of reasons for fasting, which appear to have some relevance to her situation:

> We use it either to mortify and subdue the flesh, that it may not wanton, or to prepare the better for prayer and holy meditation; or

> to give evidence of humbling ourselves before God, when we would confess our guilt before him.(46)

All these motives may find expression in Clarissa's fasting. Her heart has responded, even if in a blameless fashion, to Lovelace, and now fasting subdues the flesh that could have given physical expression to that impulse of the heart as if it had indeed done so; fasting punishes Clarissa for having been human enough to feel so natural a response. Once the flesh is subdued, the soul may concentrate on the things of spirit, and seek to embrace a Divine bridegroom. Finally, Clarissa's repentance, whether for the pride she acknowledges or the desire she does not, finds a satisfactory mode of expression.

In De Doctrina Christiana, Milton asserts that fasting may avert God's wrath for a while, and adds, with the authority of Scripture, that if accompanied by prayer it can work miracles; it can cast out evil spirits.(47) Clarissa may well wish to avert God's wrath, since her penitence for the acknowledged sins of pride and disobedience is so great. If her own secret heart finds her guilty of more, although her reason does not, then Milton's comment that fasting can cast out devils has some application here; Clarissa's fast may cast out any devil in her own flesh. Fasting at once punishes desire, and precludes its further existence. Events after the rape might have seemed to confirm an unconscious conviction that punishment was due. She was imprisoned; imprisonment is the habitual punishment for guilt. A man offered to pay to free her; what kind of woman did this man conceive her to be? She was unaware that the man was Belford and that his motives were pure. It seems that Clarissa, innocent though she is, might regard Lovelace's dying cry of 'Let this expiate!' as appropriate to herself, since the process of her dying must seem very much like an expiation and an act of reconciliation.

What Clarissa does as she dies is to attempt to reverse a sense of a violation which lies deeper than the knowledge she has of the loss of physical integrity. By seeking a union with the Divine bridegroom, she can obliterate the sense that she had, after the rape, as Kinkead-Weekes points out,[48] that Lovelace had invaded not only her body but her very 'self', that he would always be with her. In giving up her life, Clarissa can preserve her 'self' and reverse the effects of an unhallowed and undesired union:

> But when all my doors are fast, and nothing but the keyhole open, and the key of late put into that, to be where you are, in a manner without opening any of them ... (p.894)

For this horror, she seeks to substitute the experience of another union, which will cancel the sense of Lovelace's presence. For Lovelace's uninvited possession of her body, she substitutes the Divine bridegroom's possession of her soul. In many ways, Clarissa's self-abnegation as she dies resembles the journey undertaken by the mystics, to abandon the world, to detach herself from all earthly loves, even those of family and friends, and finally to abandon self in order to seek union with God. What she seeks appears to be the state of which St. Teresa of Avila writes, in terms which strikingly recall those used by Clarissa above to refer to the sense of Lovelace's presence ever with her, but St. Teresa's words refer to the abiding presence of God:

> Between the Spiritual Marriage and the body there is even less connection, for this secret union takes place in the deepest centre of the soul, which must be where God Himself dwells, and I do not think there is any need of a door by which to enter it ... The Lord appears in the centre of the soul ...[49]

The mystic may regard the body, or life itself as a prison, as Clarissa does.[50] However, as Evelyn Underhill's study of mysticism points out, such figures as St. Teresa, for all the moments when they enjoy a foretaste of Heaven in a sense of

union with God, are firmly grounded in the duties and demands of this life.(51) Moreover, St. Teresa herself comments that while such favoured souls 'are no more afraid of death than they would be of a gentle rapture';(52) they learn not to desire to die, but to live so that they may benefit others and thereby praise God. Longing for God means, then, that the mystic must so far give up self as to be prepared to await that final union in order to do God's will in the world.

The reader of Richardson's novel can never be sure whether his heroine is prepared for such utter self-abnegation or whether in dying, she exerts her own unconscious, formidable will rather than waiting on the will of God. 'Nothing hath separated us from God but our own will, or rather our own will is our separation from God', says William Law.(53) Clarissa recognizes that 'Life was not so easily extinguished ... as some imagine', and adds, 'But God's will must be done! Her only prayer now was for submission to it'.(p.1341) What she does not recognize is that she may not so easily be able to make a distinction between her own will and God's.

A Christian apologist might argue that Clarissa would not die, whatever her motives in longing for death might be, unless in doing so she fulfilled the designs of Providence.(54) Clarissa has no doubt herself that Providence has overseen both her trials and her early death, and has designed her sanctification by means of them. In her experience, God has chosen her for Himself. She writes to Mrs. Norton 'God will have no rivals in the hearts of those he sanctifies'.(p.1338) The saints have said as much.(55) The reader may have reservations about Clarissa's interpretation of her own experiences and her knowledge of her own heart, but *she* makes sense of the suffering she has endured at the hands of Lovelace as the expression of a Divine dispensation to bring her to Himself.

Those who are witnesses to Clarissa's death have no doubt of her sanctity, just as Richardson intends his readers should have none. 'I cannot but look upon her as one just entering into a companionship with saints and angels', Belford writes to Lovelace,(p.1275) and records her last words: 'Come – Oh come – blessed Lord JESUS!'.(p.1362) Nor do any others doubt that she is a saint. Colonel Morden writes to James, 'Her beatification commenced yesterday afternoon',(p.1369) while Anna, viewing her friend's body, refers to her having 'commenced angel'.(p.1403) Lovelace demands her heart, to be kept enclosed in a golden casket as if it were a relic in a reliquary, and speaks of the 'sacred person of my beloved'.(pp.1383-1384) Clarissa's person, like those of many a saint, appears to be untouched by death; incorruption has traditionally been considered evidence of sanctity, and in particular, of the greatest purity.(56) Belford writes to Lovelace of the effect on the beholders of the sight of Clarissa's mortal remains:

> We could not help taking a view of the lovely corpse, and admiring the charming serenity of her noble aspect. The women declared they never saw death so lovely before; and that she looked as if in an easy slumber, the colour having not quite having left her cheeks and lips.(p.1367)

Clarissa's corpse is received with all the honour due to the 'virgin saint' which Lovelace once called her.(p.722) Only women are allowed to prepare the sanctified body for burial; it is carried to its resting place in the hall of Harlowe Place, to receive the awe and honour of the beholders, by six maidens, and attended to its burial by a great concourse of people. The church itself is crowded as if for some great and solemn event, 'Such a profound, such a silent respect did I never see paid at the funeral of princes', says Morden.(p.1407)

If not Clarissa's miracles, her acts of virtue and charity are the talk of all the congregation, who join in a chorus of praise to their departed saint, and amidst that

praise and the tears of all, Clarissa descends into the vault. The whole description of the funeral, the assemblage of potent images – the corpse untouched by corruption, Lovelace's demands for her relics, the public acclamation of sanctity – make Richardson's presentation of the event as near a formal canonization as Protestant sensibilities will allow, but a canonization it is, even so, with public acclamation taking the place of Papal decree. However, many early saints were canonized by such loving recognition, and Clarissa is presented as a saint in this ancient tradition.

And yet, for the reader perplexed by the complexities of Clarissa's life and death, the comments of two minor figures, present at the funeral, perhaps offer the nearest approach to what Richardson may have perceived as the truth. Mr. Mullins, one of the suitors she rejected while still in her father's house, casts his eyes upon her coffin and remarks that, 'In that little space ... is included all human excellence'.(p.1408) Mr. Melvill, the clegyman who conducts the service, declares when he touches on the 'unhappy step that was the cause of her untimely fate', that he 'attributed it to the state of things below, in which there could not be absolute perfection'.(p.1408)

These men, whose appearance in the novel is limited to this single occasion, have the right of the matter. Clarissa's virtue is heroic, but it is the virtue of a human being. Richardson's own comment on his heroine in the Preface to the third edition celebrates her perfection, but he qualifies his remarks by adding that she is perfect 'as far as is consistent with human frailty'.(i, xiv) The reader must conclude that Clarissa does not always understand herself, and responds, at times, to motives which she cannot consciously allow herself to recognize; her passions, for all her conscious efforts to control them, can never be perfectly subdued for, according to the Christian system which Richardson advocates, the frailty of fallen nature precludes such

perfection. Because of this, both her relationship with Lovelace and the circumstances of her own death are undercut with ambiguities, both for herself and for the reader, and must remain so.

It is impossible to say how far the circumstances of Clarissa's death held ambiguities for her creator, Richardson. There is enough in the text to imply at least that the demands of psychological validity drew him, whatever he had intended, to suggest that his saint is poised between the rock-like certainties of her conscious will, and the shifting impulses of her hidden and unconscious desires. Christian doctrine would declare that this is what it is to be human, and that such complexities are the inevitable outcome of a flawed nature which has lost its original state of integration.

If Richardson's response to the demands of psychological complexities had been less exact; if he had not allowed his heroine to reflect what is, after all, that human state of imperfection – whether the reader believes or not in the Christian system, as Richardson did, which attributes such imperfections to a fallen state in which reason does not, and cannot, perfectly control the passions – the death of Clarissa would be less problematic, but it would also be less compulsive and moving as an experience for the reader. The very complexities at once make her a saint, since she must struggle towards Heaven in the face of that fallen nature, and offer to the reader his own struggle of interpretation in witnessing hers. In the final analysis, both the saint and the novel always elude us, but are all the more fascinating for doing so.

Conclusion

Although Richardson's novels enjoyed great success on publication, it is well known that the author was disconcerted to find that in some quarters, they met with a reception that indicated some misunderstanding of his intentions.[1] On the publication of Clarissa, Richardson was distressed to find that a fair number of readers had so far managed to misunderstand those intentions as to admire Lovelace and openly express regret at his fate. Moreover, most of these readers fell into the category to which Richardson had wished to offer a particular warning 'against preferring a man of pleasure to a man of probity' as a marriage partner.[p.36] Consequently, he felt obliged in subsequent editions to make those changes in order to render Lovelace even more clearly a villain which have been explored in their effects by a number of commentators.[2] In the third edition, such material as the correspondence between Lovelace and Joseph Leman,[ii, pp.143-153] and Lovelace's fantasy of the rape of Mrs Howe and Anna[ii, pp.418-425] is supplemented by Richardson's frequent 'editorial' footnotes, which direct the reader's attention to Lovelace's villainy in his duplicity and manipulation of persons and events. (For example, i, p.254 and ii, p.90). Richardson's attempt to control his readers' responses, once his work had been released into the public domain, could only be, and has remained futile. Commentators ever since his novel's publication have interpreted and reinterpreted it in the light of their own preferred ideologies and of the social and intellectual temper of their times.

However, whatever changes Richardson may have made, Lovelace retains the fascination which may well induce the modern reader, as well as the original, to respond to him in a manner of which Richardson might not have approved. He

likewise attempted to control his readers' response to his heroine by means of additions to the text. In the third edition, he defends her against the charge of having loved so faulty a man as Lovelace, both in the text,(iv. p.111) and by his own comments in the Postscript.(iv, p.558) In the Conclusion, he casts a more favourable light on Clarissa's conduct, by providing a prudent reason for her correspondence with Lovelace(iv, p.532). Footnotes are used to exonerate Clarissa of blame, as they are used to blacken Lovelace. (For example, ii, p.33 and ii, p.156). Most notably, in response to those who accused her of 'over-niceness', he writes lengthy footnotes to point out that in her circumstances the utmost circumspection was necessary.(i. p.501 and ii. p.313) On the other hand, the heroine whom he intended should serve as an example has had her own critics,(3) while her capacity for self-deception has frequently been noted, both within the novel by Anna, and by a variety of commentators. That there is a certain ambivalence about Richardson's own treatment of her is picked up by another of the original criticisms of the novel, expressed in terms modestly indirect, that the fire-scene exhibited too much indelicacy, a contention to which Richardson replied with an earnest denial.

> I was in hopes, that the Necessity there was of drawing such a Scene as should exalt the Lady, and baffle the intended Violator, even Rakes and Libertines being Judges, was sufficiently apparent.(4)

The modern reader is perhaps more disturbed by the questions aroused, which can never be fully resolved, concerning the nature of Clarissa's long-drawn out death.

However, it is no diminution of Richardson's achievement that the reader may be both attracted to his sinner, and at the same time repelled by his acts, or that he may both celebrate with Clarissa her hard-won triumph and yet be shocked at the determination for death which she herself does not recognise as such. These complexities of conduct on the part of the characters, and such ambivalence of

response on the part of the reader open up the novel to the variety of interpretations it has evoked, and mark both the psychological insight apparent in the presentation of character and Clarissa's power to engage the reader on a number of levels. Richardson may have intended to control his readers' responses, but it is a confirmation of his novel's success that he has not been able to do so.

Whatever Richardson had intended at the novel's conception, his heroine and his anti-hero cannot be seen as characters neatly polarized. Hs concern to inculcate 'the great lessons of Christianity'(p.1495) carries the implicit recognition that Lovelace, as well as Clarissa, must be presented as having a soul to be lost or saved, and that Clarissa, no more than Lovelace, can be seen as faultless. Nothing could be achieved, as far as inculcating those 'great lessons' is concerned if his saint were so inhumanly perfect as to defy credibility and to discourage emulation, and his sinner so evil as to preclude any sympathy or identification on the part of the reader. Richardson was well aware of such dangers, and appears to have modified his conception of Clarissa's character a little in order to bring her closer to fallible humanity. In a letter Aaron Hill in 1746, he writes:

> I had further intended to make her so faultless, that a Reader should find no way to account for the Calamities she met with, and to justify Moral Equity but by looking up to a future Reward; another of my principal Doctrines; and one of my principal Views to inculcate in this Piece.(5)

However, eighteen months later he writes again to Aaron Hill that Clarissa 'should have some little things to be blamed for, tho' for nothing in her Will'.(6) It is a slight difference between faultlessness and 'some little things', but it is a distinction that ensures the credibility of his heroine as a being in whom his readers may believe, and whom they may attempt to emulate. It also establishes her credibility as a saint. Richardson understands that sanctity, in the Christian system, is not beyond the

individual's grasp; it is only beyond the point to which he may care to reach.(7) His original didactic intention to make Clarissa 'faultless' gave way to the demands of a sure creative instinct in making her both complex and flawed. She, like Lovelace, is to be seen as the product of fallen nature, as even the saints must be.

One modern commentator has referred to Clarissa as 'a Saint Teresa of her time',(8) and it is interesting to note that Saint Teresa, like her fictional sister, acknowledges the human frailty which characterizes even those who aspire to union with God. Writing for her nuns, she tells them:

> Do not, of course, for one moment imagine that, because these souls have such vehement desires and are so determined not to commit a single imperfection for anything in the world, they do not in fact commit many imperfections and even sins. Not intentionally, it is true, for the Lord will give such persons very special aid as to this: I am referring to venial sins, for from mortal sins, as far as they know, they are free, though they are not completely proof against them; and the thought that they may commit some without knowing it will cause them no small agony'.(9)

The reader of Saint Teresa's words must be reminded of Richardson's intentions that Clarissa should have some 'little things to be blamed for'. Her eventual sanctity is located in the conscious efforts she makes to overcome that frailty which the Christian system regards as integral to human nature, even in the most ardent of souls. It is clear that Saint Teresa and Richardson share a conception of human nature that is rooted in the long-established doctrines of Christian orthodoxy, and upon which the great Spanish mystic bases the above analysis of human frailty, and Richardson his presentation of his heroine and of Lovelace. Perfection is not to be achieved this side of Heaven. Instead, Clarissa is fully realized in all her human complexity and passions, engaged in a struggle with herself as much as with Lovelace. That she does not always act in accordance with the Christian conception of reason is a measure of the success of Richardson's presentation. Such

shortcomings are at once consistent with the Christian account of human nature that he wishes to offer and with psychological verisimilitude. Moreover, it is apparent that for Richardson, his conviction of the truth of Scripture itself was strengthened by the honesty with which the sins of its own heroes and saints are acknowledged:

> Is it not a strong proof of the sacred authority of the Scriptures, that the histories of David, Solomon, and its other heroes, are handed down to us with their mixture of vices and virtues?(10)

In Clarissa, he applies this lesson from the Scriptures in the creation of his heroine; writing to Frances Grainger, he makes this very point with application to his own work:

> 'Human nature will sometimes give the lye to virtue'; and so it will, but it *ought not* nor *will* in a good girl; in a girl who is good upon principle. Such a one may err by sudden impulse, thro' passion, or from persecution or provocation; but not with deliberation if she have principle.(11)

If the reader's conviction of Clarissa's sanctity depends, paradoxically, on the recognition of her human liability to error, his acknowledgement of Lovelace's villainy must be accompanied by a sense of compassion for the very same reason. Richardson may have intended to render Lovelace odious, but he remains obstinately attractive, despite the commission of acts which, by any standards the reader cares to apply, are intrinsically evil. The reader can excuse no more than does Richardson, Lovelace's sins; deception, abduction, seduction and rape are not the minor faults of which both Richardson and Saint Teresa write, nor are they acts likely to endear the perpetrator, in life or in fiction, to others. Part of the horror which the reader is intended to experience at Lovelace's probable eternal fate, arises from the fact that his creator has endowed him with many traits that are not only attractive but which are recognisable as virtues. Richardson himself asserted that his villain is not all villain:

> How Sir! ... Have you read Lovelace's Bad, and not his Good? ... Is he not generous! Is he not, with respect to *Meum* and *Tuum* Matters, just? Is he not ingenuous? Does he not on all Occasions exalt the Lady at his own Expense? Has he not therefore many Sparks of Goodness in his Heart ... (12)

Lovelace is not a relentlessly driven, mechanistic libertine like Shadwell's Don John, for whom the spectator cannot care and with whom he cannot identify, but a man in whose soul, according to the Christian account, the light of reason is shown to flame intermittently into a desire of virtue, only to be quenched again and again by the passions of pride and revenge. The reader's emotional response to Lovelace reflects the fact that Richardson has created a character whose vitality and wit he can enjoy, and of whom he may, at times, approve.

Because of such sympathies, it is impossible not to be appalled by Lovelace's fate, and to hope that Richardson's scheme, like the Christian system, allows for the unsearchable mercy of God to operate in Lovelace's case, as Richardson hints that it may do in that of Belton. Perhaps Richardson's original readers might not have been so far amiss in their protests at Lovelace's fate, but may have mistaken the basis on which they protested. It is not because Lovelace is so attractive a figure that we are meant to be appalled at his probable damnation, but because Richardson presents in him a common humanity; as with Clarissa, Lovelace is so fully realized a figure that Richardson succeeds in making any reader who accepts the Christian system reflect that Lovelace's fate is one which he could share. If Richardson intends his readers to understand that Heaven lies as open to them as it does to Clarissa, he also intends them to realize that Hell too, lies open.

Not the least of Richardson's triumphs in Clarissa is that the reader is as convinced of the respective destinations of Clarissa and of the sinners as the author must have wished him to be, and so far enters into this fictional world as to give

complete credence to the inevitability of both tragedy and triumph on the author's terms. It is clear that those terms include the consideration that Clarissa and Lovelace may be seen to represent, in some respects, opposing principles. Hers are the principles, as Richardson remarks above, of the Gospel, but of Lovelace one modern commentator has asserted that he is 'the man who worships reason above all else'.(13) It is a fair judgement on a character in whom pride of intellect predominates, but Lovelace's conception of reason does not appear to be identified, in Richardson's presentation, with the Christian conception; his reason is not used to determine his conduct in relation to the law of God.

While in some respects Lovelace exemplifies some of the effects of adopting the principles of the new philosophical systems, notably that of Hobbes, his use of reason is at once an ironic comment on the account given of that faculty by empiric philosophy, and a perversion of its exercise in terms of the Christian conception. Hume asserts that 'reason is the discovery of truth or falsehood'.(14) Lovelace's use of his reason reverses this severely reductive definition, since he employs it to create falsehood and obscure truth. In Christian terms he misapplies his reason, the faculty which is meant to lead him to Man's ultimate goal, to the purposes of sin and places it at the disposal of his libertine principles. For Richardson, some of the contentions of the new philosophical systems might well appear to be old sins in new guises. Or the modern reader might conclude that Richardson's claim that his characters present 'human nature *as it is*'(15) merely opposes an ideology congenial to himself to those which challenge the orthodoxy which he upholds and seeks to vindicate. Be that as it may, his presentation of 'human nature as it is', is consistent with the long-established Christian view of its imperfect state.

In a letter to Young, Richardson demonstrates that he has considered some of the intellectual currents of his day which challenged the views of Christian orthodoxy and that he is disturbed by them:

> But here, my friend, let me digress into a caution against the automathers, the self-taught philosophers, of the age, who set up genius above, not human learning, but divine truth. I have called genius wisdom, but let it be remembered, that in the most refined age of heathen genius, when the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the *foolishness of preaching, to save those that believed.*(16)

Richardson's assertion of orthodoxy might be seen to run counter to the intellectual tide, and yet to represent a transitional period of thought. One of the purposes of this study has been to place Richardson within the context of successive codifications of theological thought, and to examine which of the doctrines given form by those codifications his work most frequently reflects. The results of such an examination might, at certain points, seem surprising, since, although his Protestantism could never be in doubt, in some of its aspects, the religious thought which underpins his work has a provenance that reaches back beyond the Reformation. In many respects he is heir to an older tradition, some of whose theological concepts had been assimilated, or at least had not been rejected, by that Reformation. The influence of that older tradition has rarely, if ever been considered in relation to Richardson, but it has its own importance, since, as the remarks by Jonsen and Toulmin quoted on page 14 of this study point out, many of the concepts belonging to that older tradition held their place until the Enlightenment.

Richardson was writing at a time when ideas about man's nature and eternal destiny were undergoing an unprecedented re-examination. His disquiet about the irreligiousness of his age reflects such changing times, and his reassertion of Christian doctrine and values is in some respects a reassertion of some of those

concepts born of an ancient tradition. If Richardson is to be examined as a Christian author, that examination cannot be adequate without considerable reference both to the challenges of his times and to exactly what was being challenged.

In one respect, his work reflects changing times. His presentation of character appears to take the middle ground between a profession of the strict Calvinist position that man is essentially corrupt and the more sanguine opinion of human nature held by Shaftesbury and thinkers who held similar views.(17) By the end of the eighteenth century, as R. F. Brissenden has pointed out, the developments in philosophy had created an intellectual climate in which moral judgements came to be seen as influenced by subjective emotional experience. In Richardson's own time, Hume argued that such judgements were the province of a moral sentiment(18) and this appears to be a view which gained acceptance as the century wore on. Brissenden remarks:

> The role of feelings, especially in the formation of moral judgements, was particularly emphasized ... Disproportionate weight eventually came to be placed on the feelings – on sensibility at the expense of sense.(19)

Such views are opposed to the long-established opinions of Christian orthodoxy in regarding moral judgements as the province of reason, and in claiming that such judgements should be made with reference to the enduring and unchangeable standards of the eternal law. It is with these latter views that Richardson's own must be identified. His characters look to reason to determine their judgements and conduct, and know that their eternal welfare depends on an appropriate determination.

Since the intellectual climate underwent a change by the end of the century, and many of the concepts to which Christian orthodoxy had given their accepted formulation were, at least in some intellectual circles, reconsidered, could it be said

that Richardson's moral basis, predicated on those earlier formulations, had been superseded? By no means. In his own time, despite the misunderstanding of some of his readers, he had enjoyed the appreciation of a multitude of others, knowledgeable and discriminating, who both related to his characters on what may be called an emotional level and who recognized the completeness and coherence with which he had made those important concepts integral to his novel.[20] As far as the modern reader is concerned, Clarissa is open to endless interpretation and re-interpretation, and whether the system of Christianity which informs the novel is accepted or rejected by any given reader, it retains a richness and vitality which characterizes a great work.

It is clear that the relationship between Clarissa and Lovelace has resonances which transcend the merely personal, and while no reader can fail to be engaged by the fluctuations of feelings between them and by the contradictions inherent in their responses to each other, equally no reader can fail to be aware of those resonances. He himself characterized Clarissa as a 'religious novel', and the Christian message which Richardson believes to oppose the presumptuous 'genius' of which he speaks above, is conveyed with a coherence and conviction which must impress the reader, whatever his own beliefs, or lack of them. However, in presenting Clarissa and Lovelace, he is not offering representations of opposing ideologies, but characters with whom the reader may engage, and in this encounter, watching their tortured and tortuous relationship unfold, find that his intellectual and emotional responses are demanded and then satisfied, since Richardson brings both into a perfect adjustment.

Richardson might claim that his heroine and his villain are both representatives of fallen man, in a world in which trial must be an inevitable condition. It is a painful state, but one in which salvation, although demanding of

achievement, is yet possible, while failure to meet such demands brings an eternity of pain and loss. The reader may or may not share Richardson's own convictions on the matter, but it cannot be denied that in his fictional world he demonstrates with an urgency that gives the novel much of its force, the strength of those convictions, and persuades his reader both that the Christian triumph of salvation is never to be achieved without cost and that the Christian tragedy of loss can never be contemplated without compassion.

Notes

Notes to 'Introduction'

(1) See The Richardson-Stinstra Correspondence and Stinstra's Prefaces to *Clarissa*, ed. by William C. Slattery (London and Amsterdam: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969), p.41

(2) Christopher Hill, 'Clarissa Harlowe and her Times', Essays in Criticism, 5 (1955), 315-340

(3) Rita Goldberg, Sex and Enlightenment: Women in Richardson and Diderot (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p.18

(4) Carol Houlihan Flynn, Samuel Richardson: A Man of Letters (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), Preface, p.ix

(5) Donalee Frega, Speaking in Hunger: Gender, Discourse and Consumption in *Clarissa* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998)

(6) Cynthia Griffin Wolff, Samuel Richardson and the Eighteenth-Century Puritan Character (Hamden; Conn: Shoe String, 1972)

(7) William Beatty Warner, Reading *Clarissa*: The Struggles of Interpretation (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979)

(8) Robert A. Erickson, '"Written in the Heart", *Clarissa* and Scripture', Eighteenth-Century Fiction 2, No. 1 (1989-90), pp.17-52

(9) Terry Eagleton, The Rape of *Clarissa* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982)

(10) See Reading *Clarissa*, p.113

(11) See Brigitte Glaser, The Body in Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa*: Contexts and Contradictions in the Development of Character (Heidelberg: Winter, 1994) p.92, and Margaret Anne Doody, A Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), p.152

(12) Rosemary Bechler '"Triall by What is Contrary": Samuel Richardson and Christian Dialectic' in Samuel Richardson: Passion and Prudence, ed. By Valerie Grove Myer (London: Vision, 1986), pp.93-113, and Margaret Anne Doody, 'The Gnostic Clarissa', Eighteenth-Century Fiction, 11 (October 1998), pp.49-78

(13) Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, trans. by David Ross (London: Oxford University Press, 1925; repr. 1954), p.51

Albert R. Jonsen and Stephen Toulmin, The Abuse of Casuistry: A History of Moral Reasoning (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), discuss Christianity's assimilation of Aristotelean casuistry. (Ch.6)

Notes to Chapter 1 - 'The Cause of Religion and Virtue'

(1) See The Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson ed. by John Carroll (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), p.92

(2) Letters and Passages restored from the Original Manuscripts of the History of *Clarissa*, to which is subjoined a Collection of the Moral and Instructive Sentiments, Cautions, Aphorisms, Reflections and Observations contained in the History, as are presumed to be of general Use and Service: See Samuel Richardson's Published Commentary on Clarissa, 1747-1765, ed. by Florian Stuber, 3 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 1998) II, p.301.

Future references to this collection, and to that in Stuber vol. III, which includes sentiments drawn from Pamela and Sir Charles Grandison, will refer hereafter to Collection.

(3) Carroll, p.53

(4) Carroll, pp.54-55

(5) T. C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel, Samuel Richardson: A Biography (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p.550

(6) See Slattery, p.24

(7) See Carroll, p.238

(8) Jonsen and Toulmin, p.124

(9) See Postscript to Clarissa, p.124

(10) An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, ed. by Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979; repr. 1991), Foreword, p.viii

(11) Essay, p.622

(12) Essay, p.623

(13) Essay, Foreword, p.xv

(14) Essay, p.95. Compare with Richardson's views, Clarissa, p.596. See John Dunn, J. O. Urmson and A. J. Ayers: The British Empiricists (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p.71

(15) Essay, p.540

(16) See John W. Yolton's discussion of these mechanistic theories in Thinking Matter: Materialism in Eighteenth Century Britain (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984), pp.14-15 and pp.35-36

(17) Philip C. Almond, Heaven and Hell in Enlightenment England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), discusses orthodox and heterodox views of the nature of the soul, Ch. 1-2

(18) Samuel Richardson: Master Printer (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950), p.125

(19) See Carroll, p.317

(20) Carroll, p.317

(21) See The Correspondence of Edward Young, ed. by Henry Pettit (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp.190-191

For a discussion of the origin of this doctrine, see Almond, p.5

(22) Carroll, p.308

(23) Carroll, p.317

(24) The British Empiricists, pp.274-275

(25) Enquiries Concerning Human Understanding and Concerning the Principles of Morals, ed. by L. A. Selby-Bigge; revised by P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p.71

(26) Enquiries, p.165

(27) Enquiries, pp.109-131

(28) Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, ed. by Timothy McDermott (London: Methuen, 1991), p.427

(29) John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. by Henry Beveridge, 2 vols (London: Clarke, 1953) I, p.169

(30) A Treatise of Human Nature, ed. by Ernest C. Mossner (London: Penguin, 1984, repr. 1987), p.518

(31) Treatise, pp.508-510

(32) Treatise, p.462

(33) The City of God, trans. by Henry Bettensen (London: Pelican, 1972; repr. Penguin, 1984), p.346

(34) Summa Theologiae, p.125

(35) Institutes, I, p.245

(36) Carroll, p.112

(37) Carroll, p.62

(38) Summa Theologiae, p.196

(39) Treatise, p.447

(40) See Ayer's remarks, The British Empiricists, pp.257-258

(41) Treatise, p.456

(42) Treatise, pp.658-659

(43) Leviathan, ed. by J. C. A. Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp.37-38

(44) Richardson's own respect for Revelation is expressed in the Advertisement to the Reader which prefaces Meditations Collected from the Sacred Books. These Meditations, he says 'might possibly be a means of raising in the minds of the contemners of Religion a due estimation of the Sacred Books'. Stuber I, p.166

(45) Leviathan, p.261

(46) Leviathan, p.447

(47) Leviathan, p.448

(48) J. C. A. Gaskin, Introduction to Leviathan, pp.xxxii-xxxiii

(49) Leviathan, pp.33-34

(50) Leviathan, p.41

(51) See Introduction to Leviathan, p.xli and Richard Peters, Hobbes (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1956), pp.161-165 for a modern criticism of Hobbes's contentions on this question

(52) Christopher Hill, The World Turned Upside Down (London: Penguin, 1991), p.388

(53) Leviathan, p.40

(54) Leviathan, p.139

(55) Thomas Hobbes, The Elements of Law, ed. by J. C. A. Gaskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p.90

(56) See Warren Chernaik, Sexual Freedom in Restoration Literature (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp.22-51

(57) Preface to Clarissa, p.36. Elsewhere, Richardson comments: 'There can be no hope of a man of profligate life whose vices have taken root in infidelity'. (Collection, Stuber II, p.256)

(58) Jocelyn Harris, 'Richardson: Original or Learned Genius?' in Samuel Richardson: Tercentenary Essays, ed. by M. A. Doody and Peter Sabor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp.188-202 (p.195)

(59) The Libertine, ed. by Stephen Orgel (New York and London: Garland, 1987), III ii

(60) The Libertine, III ii. In the third edition, Richardson has Lovelace mock such religious figures who withdraw for the sake of repentance by a humorous fantasy of himself and Belford, aged and reformed, as hermits. (iv, p.42)

(61) Carroll, p.103

(62) Introduction to The Libertine, p.xvi

(63) The Libertine, II i

(64) Leviathan, p.66

(65) Leviathan, pp.65-66

(66) Treatise, p.300. I mentioned this comparison in my unpublished master's dissertation 'Fit to be a Prince' (University of London, 1993), p.60

(67) Elements of Law, p.50

(68) Elements of Law, pp.55-56

(69) Introduction to Leviathan, p.xxxi

(70) Richardson comments on the libertine creed: 'A libertine believes that no woman can be chaste or virtuous from principle'. Collection, Stuber II, p.259

(71) Elements of Law, p.56

Notes to Chapter 2 - 'The Light of Reason and the Grace of God'

(1) St. Augustine, Confessions, trans. by R. S. Pine-Coffin (London: Penguin, 1961), p.47

(2) Institutes, I, p.164

(3) Summa Theologiae, p.266

(4) Linwood Urban, A Short History of Christian Thought (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp.144-145

(5) See The City of God, p.510

(6) Thomas à Kempis, The Imitation of Christ, trans. by Leo Sherley-Price (London: Penguin, 1952; repr. 1959), p.40

(7) The Imitation of Christ, p.169

(8) Institutes, I, p.169

(9) The City of God, p.993

(10) Institutes, I, p.217

(11) Institutes, I, p.226

(12) Institutes, I, p.233

(13) See Carroll, p.41

(14) See Carroll, p.87

(15) William Law, A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), p.67. Richardson appears to hold the same opinion. In Meditations Collected from the Sacred Books (1750), the introduction to Meditation XX remarks:

> Clarissa, as if conscious that she had been guilty of a faulty diffidence, takes comfort to herself in reflecting that the Almighty expects not perfection even in his saints.
> (See Stuber I, p.216)

(16) The City of God, pp.1022-1023

(17) Ibid. See also Enchiridion, trans. by Ernest Evans (London: SPCK, 1953), p.25

(18) The City of God, pp.635-636

(19) The City of God, p.1089

(20) Confessions, p.33

(21) Summa Contra Gentiles, trans. by The English Dominican Fathers, 4 vols (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1923-1929), III ii (1928), pp184-185

(22) In the Postscript to the third edition, Richardson offers a defence of the epistolary method as being especially well-suited to the presentation of his principal characters in their particular situation. (iv, pp.562-563)

(23) Isabel Rivers, Reason, Grace and Sentiment: A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660-1780, Vol. 1(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.11

(24) In the Collection, Richardson comments, 'Sins presumptuously committed against knowledge, and against warning, are the most unpardonable of all others'. Stuber, II, p.250

(25) Carroll, p.88

(26) Institutes, I, p.361

(27) Summa Theologiae, p.252

(28) Summa Theologiae, p.256

(29) Treatise, p.508

(30) Summa Theologiae, pp.191-192

(31) Summa Theologiae, p.275

(32) Summa Theologiae, p.274

(33) Institutes, I, p.253

(34) See Stuber III, p.303

(35) See Carroll, p.103

(36) Summa Theologiae, p.256

(37) A Serious Call, pp.164-165

(38) Summa Theologiae, p.347

(39) Confessions, p.33

(40) The City of God, p.196

(41) The City of God, pp.471-472

(42) Institutes, I, pp.234-235

(43) Summa Theologiae, p.378

(44) The City of God, pp.1072-1073

(45) The City of God, p.1072

(46) Doctor Bartlett comments that Sir Charles 'judges of everything, according to the rules of right and prudence'. VII, 301

(47) Grandison, vii, 466

(48) The City of God, p.472

(49) The Imitation of Christ, p.107

(50) A Serious Call, p.125

(51) A Serious Call, p.135

(52) Summa Theologiae, p.144

(53) Summa Theologiae, p.289

(54) A Serious Call, p.258

(55) Summa Theologiae, p.146

(56) The City of God, pp.323-324

(57) See Carroll, p.47

(58) Collection, Stuber III, p.326

(59) Matthew, 15: 18-20

(60) See Pettit, p.297

(61) Matthew 5:44

(62) Summa Theologiae, p.203

(63) Night Thoughts, ed. by Stephen Cornford (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) Night VII, 524-530

(64) Grandison, III, 8

(65) Robert A. Erickson, 'Written in the Heart', Eighteenth-Century Fiction, 2 (1989-90), 17-52 (p.30)

(66) The City of God, p.854

(67) Areopagitica, ed. by Ernest Sirluck. The Complete Prose Works of John Milton, 8 vols. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1953-1982), II (1959), p.527

(68) See Stuber III, p.56

(69) Institutes, I, p.256. For St. Augustine's changing views, see Urban, p.183

(70) Institutes, I, p.228

(71) Summa Theologiae, p.309

(72) The Imitation of Christ, pp.47-48

(73) See Summa Theologiae, p.309

(74) The Imitation of Christ, p.209

(75) The Imitation of Christ, p.203

(76) Jeremy Taylor, Holy Dying, ed. by P. G. Stanwood (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p.96

(77) The Imitation of Christ, p.103

(78) The Imitation of Christ, p.166

Notes to Chapter 3 - 'Holy Living I : The Love of God'

(1) The City of God, p.897

(2) The City of God, p.556

(3) Summa Contra Gentiles, III ii, p.97

(4) Institutes, I, p.356

(5) Institutes, I, p.317

(6) Sixteen Discourses upon Doctrines and Duties more Peculiarly Christian, and against the Reigning Vanities of the Age (London, 1754), pp.36-37

(7) A Serious Call, p.47

(8) See Slattery, p.82

(9) See Aquinas's remarks on the point, Summa Theologiae, p.174

(10) 2 Cor. 3:18

(11) The City of God, pp.1081-1087

(12) Summa Theologiae, p.26

(13) Institutes, II, p.273

(14) A Serious Call, p.50

(15) A Serious Call, p.62

(16) A Serious Call, p.334

(17) Institutes, II, p.8

(18) A Serious Call, p.91

(19) Jeremy Taylor, Holy Living, ed. by P. G. Stanwood (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p.23

(20) Ibid.

(21) A Serious Call, p.192

(22) Tom Keymer, 'Clarissa's *Clarissa*', in Samuel Richardson: Tercentenary Essays, pp.89-109 (96-97)

(23) Summa Theologiae, p.403

(24) A Serious Call, p.301

(25) Flynn remarks on the ambiguities of Clarissa's forgiveness both to Lovelace and the Harlowes (pp.43-45)

(26) Holy Living, p.213

(27) G. A. Starr, Defoe and Spiritual Autobiography (New York: Gordian, 1971), p.4. Jocelyn Harris in her introduction to Samuel Richardson's Published Commentary draws a comparison between the Commentary itself and puritan autobiography. In the former, Richardson comments on his work as soon as it is written; in the latter, life is examined as soon as it is lived. (See Stuber 1, p.ix)

(28) Institutes, I, p.318

(29) A Serious Call, pp.328-332

(30) Confessions, p.39

(31) Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners, ed. by W. R. Owens (London: Penguin, 1987), pp.10-11

(32) The City of God, p.196

(33) Summa Contra Gentiles, III, i, p.190

(34) Institutes, I, p.176

(35) See Urban, pp.200-201

(36) See Carroll, p.175

(37) Treatise, p.297

(38) Institutes, I, p.204

(39) Summa Theologiae, p.53

(40) Summa Contra Gentiles, III, i, p.182

(41) Summa Theologiae, p.53

(42) Institutes, I, p.188

(43) See The City of God, pp.568-569

(44) Summa Theologiae, p.92

(45) Institutes, I, p.203

(46) Paradise Lost, I, 218

(47) Paradise Lost, I, 209-219

(48) Paradise Regained, I, 495-496

(49) Paradise Regained, I, 377

(50) Institutes, I, p.188

(51) The Imitation of Christ, p.174

(52) Institutes, I, p.181

(53) Institutes, I, p.183

Notes to Chapter 4 – 'Holy Living II : Charity

(1) Enchiridion, p.64

(2) Summa Theologiae, p.351

(3) Institutes, I, pp.357-358

(4) Institutes, I, p.356

(5) See Hume, Enquiries, pp.176-182

(6) See Shaftesbury, Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times, ed. by Gerd Hemmerich and Wolfram Benda, 2 vols. (Stuttgart-Bad, Canstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1981-1993), II 2 (1984) pp.179-181

(7) See also Job 29: 11-16

(8) Confessions, p.339

(9) Institutes, II, p.12

(10) Institutes, II, p.11

(11) See R. H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism (London: Penguin, 1938; repr. 1977), pp.122-123

(12) The Fable of the Bees, ed. by Philip Harth (London: Penguin, 1989), p.275

(13) Holy Living, pp.228-229

(14) Sixteen Discourses, pp.224-225

(15) Holy Living, p.229

(16) A Serious Call, p.96

(17) A Serious Call, pp.96-97

(18) Holy Dying, p.168

(19) Holy Dying, p.170

(20) Enchiridion, p.62

(21) Holy Dying, p.169

(22) Institutes, I, p.347

(23) A Serious Call, p.288

(24) A Serious Call, p.293

(25) The City of God, p.873

(26) Enchiridion, p.66

(27) A Serious Call, p.298

(28) Enchiridion, p.64

(29) Summa Theologiae, p.349

(30) Institutes, I, p.360

(31) Carroll, p.150

(32) Carroll, p.164. See also the remark on Clarissa and Lovelace in the introduction to Meditation II.

> But yet she neither execrates him nor the wicked women, with whom she was detained by violence. CLARISSA WAS A CHRISTIAN. (Stuber I, p.176)

(33) Enchiridion, p.73

(34) Enchiridion, p.63

(35) Holy Dying, p.61

(36) Summa Theologiae, p.363

Notes to Chapter 5 – 'Holy Living III : Justice'

(1) Republic, trans. and ed. by Francis MacDonald Cornford (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1941) pp.40-136

(2) Ethics, pp.106-136

(3) Enquiries, p.141

(4) Summa Theologiae, p.234

(5) Summa Theologiae, p.300

(6) Institutes, I, p.324

(7) Institutes, I, p.352

(8) Institutes, I, p.227

(9) Institutes, I, p.242

(10) Summa Theologiae, p.398

(11) Institutes, I, p.346

(12) Carroll, p.210

(13) Carroll, pp.199-200

(14) The Relative Duties of Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Masters and Servants; Consider'd in Sixteen Practical Discourses, 2nd edn. (London, 1716), p.2

(15) The Relative Duties, p.36

(16) 'Clarissa Harlowe and her Times', Essays in Criticism, 5 (1955), 315-340 (p.315)

(17) Locke presents an opposing view, Two Treatises of Government, ed. by Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960; repr. 1988) pp.315-317

(18) Sermons upon Social Duties (London, 1744). Quoted by Alan Dugald McKillop in Samuel Richardson: Printer and Novelist (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1936; repr. Hamden Conn: Shoe String, 1968), p.135

(19) The Relative Duties, pp.37-42

(20) The Relative Duties, pp.42-43

(21) Carroll, p.131. See the Collection, Stuber II, p.271.

> Tho' the parental authority should be deemed sacred,
> yet Parents should have reason in what they do.

(22) See Lawrence Stone, The Family Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800 (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977), pp.288-289 and pp 309-313 for examples of coercion.

(23) Summa Theologiae, p.384

(24) Carroll, p.205

(25) See The Relative Duties, p.44

(26) Carroll, p.207

(27) The Relative Duties, p.34

(28) The Relative Duties, p.24. In the Collection, Richardson offers comment which would seem to agree with Fleetwood's remarks:

> No husband, no earthly power, can dispense with a divine obligation. (See Stuber III, p.33)

(29) Carroll, p.144

(30) See A Serious Call, p.260

(31) Summa Theologiae, p.398

(32) 'A pious end, and a crown of glory, are generally the natural fruits of a virtuous education.' See Collection, Stuber, II, p.241

(33) Holy Living, p.145

(34) Holy Living, p.155

(35) A Serious Call, p.130

(36) Institutes, I, p.349

(37) Collection, Stuber III, p.352

(38) The Excellence of Marriage, trans. by Ray Kearney, The Works of St. Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century, 25 vols. (New York: New City, 1997-1999) IX (1997), p.49

(39) Summa Theologiae, p.516

(40) Commentaries on the Book of Genesis, trans. by John King (Edinburgh: Calvin Translation Society, 1847), p.98

(41) Ibid.

(42) Summa Contra Gentiles, III, ii, pp.111-113

(43) Institutes, I, p.352

(44) Commentaries on the Book of Genesis, p.134

(45) Commentaries on the Book of Genesis, pp.129-130

(46) See Hume, Enquiries, pp.206-208

(47) Mandeville, The Fable of the Bees, p.106

(48) The Excellence of Marriage, pp.35-37

(49) Summa Theologiae, p.429

(50) Commentaries on the Book of Genesis, p.134

(51) Holy Living, p.81

(52) See Collection, Stuber III, p.50

(53) See the Collection: 'A *good* woman who vows duty to a wicked man, knowing him to be such, puts to hazard her eternal happiness.' Stuber, II, p.222

(54) Carroll, p.313

(55) Summa Theologiae, p.384

(56) Marriage and Desire, trans. by Roland J Teske, The Works of St. Augustine, xxiv (1998), p.36

(57) Summa Theologiae, p.143

(58) Commentaries on the Book of Genesis, p.129

(59) Carroll, p.298. Richardson offers some firmly traditional opinions on the relative merits of male and female in the Collection:

> The intellects of women generally ripen sooner than those of men; but men, like trees of slow growth, generally hold longer, are capable of higher perfection, and serve to nobler purposes. (Stuber III, p.337)

(60) 'The Puritan Art of Love', Huntington Library Quarterly. 5 (1941-1942), 235-272 (p.250)

(61) See Vivien Jones's discussion of early modern feminists in Women in the Eighteenth Century: Constructions of Femininity (London: Routledge, 1990), pp.192-196

(62) See James Grantham Turner, One Flesh: Paradisal Marriage and Sexual Relations in the Age of Milton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), pp.96-123

(63) Two Treatises of Government, p.174

(64) Carroll, p.202

(65) Holy Living, p.156

(66) Ibid.

Notes to Chapter 6 – 'Temptation and Trial'

(1) The Idler, No. 89. Saturday 29 December 1759. The Idler, 1758-1760, 2 vols. (London, 1761) I, p.206

(2) Confessions, p.232

(3) Paradise Lost, X, 5-11. See also The City of God, p.569 and Institutes, I, p.153

(4) The Imitation of Christ, p.41

(5) Carroll, p.108

(6) Summa Theologiae, p.309

(7) Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God, trans. by J. K.S. Reid (London: Clarke, 1961), p.123

(8) Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God, p.121

(9) The City of God, pp.693-694

(10) De Doctrina Christiana, trans. by John Carey; ed. by Maurice Kelley, CPW, VI (1973), pp.337-339

(11) The Imitation of Christ, p.130

(12) Summa Theologiae, p.263

(13) Summa Theologiae, p.262

(14) 'Anfractuous Ways' in Samuel Richardson: Passion and Prudence, pp.114-125 (p.116)

(15) The City of God, p.990

(16) Summa Theologiae, p.158

(17) Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God, p.51

(18) Paradise Lost, IV, 821

(19) Paradise Lost, IV, 846-849

(20) The City of God, p.975

(21) Institutes, I, p.152

(22) Paradise Regained, I, 355-356

(23) Paradise Regained, I, 387-390

(24) See Lesley Berry 'Anfractuous Ways', (p.117), and Janet Butler, 'The Garden: An early Symbol of Clarissa's Complicity', Studies in English Literature, 24 (1984), 527-544 (p.533)

(25) The City of God, p.14

(26) Samuel Richardson: A Man of Letters, p.256. Opposing responses to trial by Clarissa and Lovelace were discussed, briefly, in my 1993 master's dissertation, 'Fit to be a Prince' (pp.64-65)

(27) See Carroll, p.94

(28) Kinkead-Weekes, p.400 and p.230

(29) See Pamela I, p.213 and Grandison IV, p.456

(30) Confessions, p.44

(31) The City of God, p.41

(32) Carroll, p151

(33) See Jonathan Lamb's study, The Rhetoric of Suffering: Reading the Book of Job in the Eighteenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995)

(34) Paradise Regained, I, 368-370

(35) Paradise Regained, IV, 634-635

(36) The Imitation of Christ, p.157

(37) The Imitation of Christ, p.160

(38) Confessions, p.76

(39) The Imitation of Christ, p.144

(40) The Imitation of Christ, pp.138-9

(41) Summa Theologiae, p.528

(42) Holy Dying, p.84

(43) The Imitation of Christ, p.172

(44) Stuber III, p.223

(45) Jacob Boehme, The Way to Christ (New York: The Paulist Press, 1978), p.196. See Rosemary Bechler's essay 'Trial by What is Contrary' in Samuel Richardson: Passion and Prudence, pp.93-113

(46) Holy Dying, p.91

(47) Holy Living, p.99

(48) Ibid.

(49) Carroll, p.190

(50) The Dark Night of the Soul, The Complete Works of St. John of the Cross, ed. and trans. by E. Allison Peers, 3 vols (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1934, repr. 1947) I, p.388

(51) A Serious Call, p.291

(52) Slattery, p.199

(53) Night Thoughts, Night IX, 404-407

(54) See Milton, De Doctrina Christiana, p.353

(55) Carroll, p.108. See the introduction to Meditation XIV:

> Clarissa is to be an example of suffering Virtue according to the Christian System. She was to be tried as gold in the fire of affliction. (Stuber I, p.202)

(56) Areopagitica, p.515

(57) The Dark Night, p.396

(58) The Dark Night, pp.429-430

Notes to Chapter 7 – 'That False Fruit'

(1) See Maynard Mack's introduction to The Essay on Man (London: Methuen, 1950), pp.xxxii-xl

(2) Carroll, p.87

(3) See The City of God, pp.580-589, Summa Theologiae, p.148, and Institutes, I, p.349

(4) Paradise Lost IX, 1011-1016

(5) Paradise Lost VIII, 588-594

(6) See Paradise Lost IX, 1029-1033

(7) The City of God, pp.580-581

(8) Marriage and Desire, p.77

(9) The City of God, p.582

(10) Summa Theologiae, p.431

(11) Ibid.

(12) Summa Theologiae, p.432

(13) Confessions, p.72. For St. Augustine's grief, see p.131

(14) A Serious Call, p.350

(15) In the third edition, Belford offers a vivid, even grotesque vision of the final days that Mowbray and Tourville will endure, if unreformed. (iii, pp.483-484)

(16) See Prov. 23:27

(17) Holy Living, p.78

(18) 'Grotesque, Classical and Pornographic Bodies in *Clarissa*', in New Essays on Samuel Richardson, ed. by Albert J. Rivero (London: MacMillan, 1996), pp.101-116 (p.104)

(19) An Apology for Smectymnuus, ed. by Don M. Wolfe, CPW I, (1953), p.892

(20) Luke 15:30

(21) Quoted in Women in the Eighteenth Century, p.87

(22) See Eaves and Kimpel, pp.463-465

(23) Richardson refers explicitly to such a situation in the Collection. See Stuber, III, pp.2 and 219

(24) See Carroll, p.171

(25) Hume's Enquiries, pp.206-207. For a discussion of women as property, see Keith Thomas 'The Double Standard', Journal of the History of Ideas, 20 (1959), 195-216

(26) Lord Chesterfield's Letters, ed. by David Roberts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p.189

(27) See Patricia Meyer Spacks, 'Ev'ry Woman is at Heart a Rake', Eighteenth-Century Studies, 8 (1974-5), 27-46 (p.28)

(28) St. Augustine writing to Bishop Atticus of Constantinople. Quoted in the introduction to Marriage and Desire, p.23

(29) See Flynn, p.24

(30) The City of God, p.26

(31) John Allen Stevenson, 'Alien Spirits: The Unity of Lovelace and Clarissa' in New Essays on Samuel Richardson, pp.85-99 (p.94)

(32) Holy Living, p.61

(33) Mark Kinkead-Weekes, Samuel Richardson: Dramatic Novelist (London: Methuen), p.212 and p.229

(34) Summa Theologiae, p.430

(35) De Doctrina Christiana, ed. and trans. by R. P. H. Green (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), pp.33-34

(36) De Doctrina Christiana, p.161

(37) The third edition further stresses Lovelace's attraction to Clarissa's high-spirited friend as a subject for his fantasies of conquest. Lovelace would see that campaign as challenging but easier than that waged on Clarissa. (iii, p.473)

(38) The City of God, p.40

(39) See The City of God, p.440 and Summa Theologiae, p.91

(40) De Doctrina Christiana, p.149

Notes to Chapter 8 – 'A Perverse Kind of Exaltation'

(1) The City of God, pp.571-572

(2) Carroll, p.92

(3) The City of God, pp.868-869

(4) The City of God, p.573

(5) 1 Cor. 8:1

(6) The City of God, p.366

(7) Paradise Lost, IX, 135-138

(8) Paradise Lost, IX, 163-169

(9) Summa Theologiae, p.437

(10) Summa Theologiae, p.437

(11) Summa Theologiae, p.436

(12) Summa Theologiae, p.268

(13) See the Collection: 'We ought not to value ourselves on talents we give not to ourselves.' Stuber II, p.281

(14) Summa Theologiae, p.436

(15) A Serious Call, p.229

(16) Summa Theologiae, pp.16-17

(17) A Serious Call, p.232

(18) The City of God, p.657

(19) The Christian Hero, ed. by Rae Blanchard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932), p.51

(20) The City of God, p.717

(21) Paradise Lost, II, 46-49

(22) The Imitation of Christ, p.50

(23) The City of God, p.875. Richardson offers a succinct comment to the same effect in the Collection:

> A man, by seeming afraid of control, often subjects himself to it. (Stuber 11, p.231)

(24) Paradise Lost, VI, 172-182

(25) Paradise Lost, IX, 129-30

(26) Paradise Lost, IV, 110

(27) The Imitation of Christ, p.165

(28) Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God, p.181

(29) Paradise Lost, IV, 808-809

(30) A Serious Call, p.311

(31) A Serious Call, p.312. See the Collection:

> The man who is disposed immoderately to exalt himself, must despise every-body else in proportion. (Stuber II, p.296)

(32) Holy Living, p.92

(33) Autobiography, ed. by N. H. Keeble; abridged by J. M. Lloyd-Thomas (London: Dent, 1931; repr. 1974), p.124

(34) The Imitation of Christ, p.144

(35) The City of God, p.572

(36) The Imitation of Christ, p.103

Notes to Chapter 9 – 'The Four Last Things : The Sinner'

(1) See Carroll, p.122

(2) The City of God, p.510

(3) The Imitation of Christ, pp.56-57

(4) Grace Abounding, p.66

(5) See Holy Dying, p.66

(6) See Holy Dying, p.149

(7) See Summa Theologiae, p.348, and Holy Dying, p.71. Richardson gives this doctrine explicit expression in the Collection:

> If we despond, there can be no hope of cure. To despond is to add sin to sin. (Stuber II, p.235)

(8) See Holy Dying, pp.140-142, and A Serious Call, pp.68-69

(9) See Grace Abounding, p.38.

(10) See Holy Dying, pp.149-150

(11) cf Holy Dying, p.126

(12) Holy Dying, p.116 and pp.175-80

(13) Doody, p.152

(14) Carroll, pp.121-122

(15) Carroll, pp.88-89

(16) Carroll, p.113

(17) Hints of Prefaces: Stuber I, p.321

(18) Lovelace's role playing is often noted. See Flynn, p.246, and Kinkead-Weekes, p.156

(19) The City of God, p.14

(20) Summa Theologiae, p.124

(21) The Imitation of Christ, p.50

(22) In the Collection, Richardson stresses such folly typographically. He attributes to Lovelace a remark proposing repentance in old age, and adds: 'LOVELACE LIVED NOT TO REPENT!' Stuber II, p.290

(23) Holy Living, p.246

(24) See Collection: Stuber III, p.50

(25) The Imitation of Christ, p.163

(26) Carroll, p.94. In the third edition, Richardson has Anna use the same phrase – 'self-admirer' to describe Lovelace, (ii, p.105) while Lovelace himself remarks that it would mortify his vanity if he thought any woman could hate him. (ii, p.392)

(27) Kinkead-Weekes, p.274, p.493, and p.212

(28) See Stuber III, p.67

(29) Summa Theologiae, p.197 (19:7)

(30) Institutes, I, p.347

(31) Collection: Stuber III, p.254

(32) See Wolff, pp.154-155, and Flynn, p.255

(33) See Sixteen Discourses, p.260 and The Christian Hero, p.80. Richardson made a posthumous contribution to this debate with the publication of Six Original Letters upon Duelling (1765), published in The Candid Review and Literary Repository for March 1765. (See Stuber I, pp.281-285)

(34) The Imitation of Christ, p.56

(35) The Life and Death of Mr. Badman, ed. by James R. Forrest and Roger Sharrock (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp.150-151

(36) Mr. Badman, p.163

(37) Carroll, p.121

(38) See Collection: Stuber II, p.293

(39) Kinkead-Weekes, p.274

(40) Carroll, p.122

Notes to Chapter 10 – 'The Four Last Things : The Saint'

(1) Ps. 116:15

(2) Carroll, p.94

(3) Carroll, p.88

(4) See Flynn, p.22

(5) See Carroll, p.95

(6) Holy Dying, p.6

(7) See Hints of Prefaces, where Richardson asserts that the History of Clarissa is designed ' to teach the Reader how to die, as well as how to live'. Stuber I, p.325

(8) Institutes, II, pp.518-519

(9) A Serious Call, pp.339-340

(10) cf The Practice of Pietie, p.45

(11) Holy Dying, pp.245-246

(12) A Serious Call, p.329, and p.332

(13) Holy Dying, p.55

(14) The City of God, p.514

(15) Johnsonian Miscellanies, I, 297, ed. by G. Birkbeck Hill (Oxford, 1898). Quoted by Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel (London: Hogarth, 1987), p.228

(16) See Kinkead-Weekes, p.239, and Frega, p.350

(17) 1 Cor. 15:17

(18) De Doctrina Christiana, p.33

(19) De Doctrina Christiana, pp.35-36

(20) It is only in the Meditations Collected from the Sacred Books (1750) that Richardson is prepared to allow his heroine to display any natural fear of death. See Stuber I, p.193 and p.218

(21) Summa Theologiae, p.355

(22) Summa Theologiae, p.180

(23) Ibid.

(24) The City of God, pp.532-533

(25) Sex and Sensibility: Ideal and Erotic Love from Milton to Mozart (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p.164

(26) Confessions, p.293

(27) Doody, p.227

(28) In the Collection, Richardson acknowledges that there may be a confusion of motives in those who desire death. See Stuber II, p.218

(29) Mysticism (London: Methuen, 2nd edn. 1911), pp.162-67

(30) See Kinkead-Weekes, p.167

(31) Carroll, p.104

(32) The Rapes of Lucretia: A Myth and its Transformations (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982). Both Clarissa (p.895) and Lovelace (p.900) refer to this myth.

(33) See Ayer's essay on Hume in The British Empiricists, pp.185-277 (p.194)

(34) Biathanatos, ed. by Ernest W. Sullivan II (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1984), p.80

(35) See Eagleton, p.90, and Flynn, p.40

(36) Collection: Stuber III, p.361

(37) The City of God, p.30

(38) Ibid.

(39) The City of God, p.31

(40) See Wolff, pp.155-156, who remarks upon the introspection required by Protestantism, and A. D. Harvey, '*Clarissa* and the Puritan Tradition', Essays in Criticism, 28 (1978) 38-50, comments on Clarissa's loss of any place in her society (p.49)

(41) Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Mediaeval Women (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp.193-199

(42) Holy Feast, p.216

(43) Holy Feast, p.152

(44) Biathanatos, p.94

(45) Summa Theologiae, p.428

(46) Institutes, II, p.462

(47) De Doctrina Christiana, p.679

(48) See Kinkead-Weekes, p.241

(49) The Interior Castle, ed. and trans. by E. A. Peers, The Complete Works of Saint Teresa of Jesus, 3 vols (London: Sheed and Ward, 1946) II, p.334

(50) See Mysticism, p.52

(51) Mysticism, p.167

(52) The Interior Castle, p.340

(53) Christian Regeneration, The Liberal and Mystical Writings of William Law, pp.158-160. Quoted in Mysticism, p.474

(54) See Enchiridion, p.87 for St. Augustine's view of how the good Divine will and faulty human will may coincide.

(55) See The Cloud of Unknowing, ed. by Robert Way (Wheathampstead: Anthony Clarke, 1986), p.11

(56) The body of St. Catherine of Genoa, canonized in 1733, is said to have remained incorrupt indefinitely. See the introduction to St. Catherine's work, Purgation and Purgatory, trans. by Serge Hughes (London: SPCK, 1979), p.19

Notes to 'Conclusion'

(1) See Bernard Kreissman, Pamela-Shamela (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1960)

(2) Among others, Shirley Van Master, 'Richardson's Revisions of *Clarissa* in the Second Edition', Studies in Bibliography, 26 (1973), 107-132, and 'Richardson's Revisions of *Clarissa* in the Third and Fourth Editions', Ibid. 28 (1975) 119-152. Also, Mark Kinkead-Weekes, '*Clarissa* Restored?' Review of English Studies, 10 (1959), 156-171

(3) Notably Beatty Warner

(4) Answer to the Letter of a Very Reverend and Worthy Gentleman, Objecting to the Warmth of a Particular Scene in the *History of Clarissa*. (June, 1749). See Stuber I, p.135

(5) Carroll, p.73

(6) Carroll, p.88

(7) See Carroll, p.94

(8) Doody, p.102

(9) The Interior Castle, p.344

(10) See Carroll, p.213

(11) Carroll, p.151

(12) Carroll, pp.88-89

(13) R. F. Brissenden, Virtue in Distress: Studies in the Novel of Sentiment from Richardson to Sade (London: MacMillan, 1974), p.170

(14) Treatise, p.510

(15) Carroll, p.47

(16) Carroll, p.332

(17) See Doody's comments on Richardson's contrasting approaches to religion and society in Clarissa and Grandison in A Natural Passion, p.334

(18) Treatise, pp.522-527

(19) Virtue in Distress, p.24

(20) For discriminating admirers, see Slattery, pp.40-41

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